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REAGAN'S REIGN:
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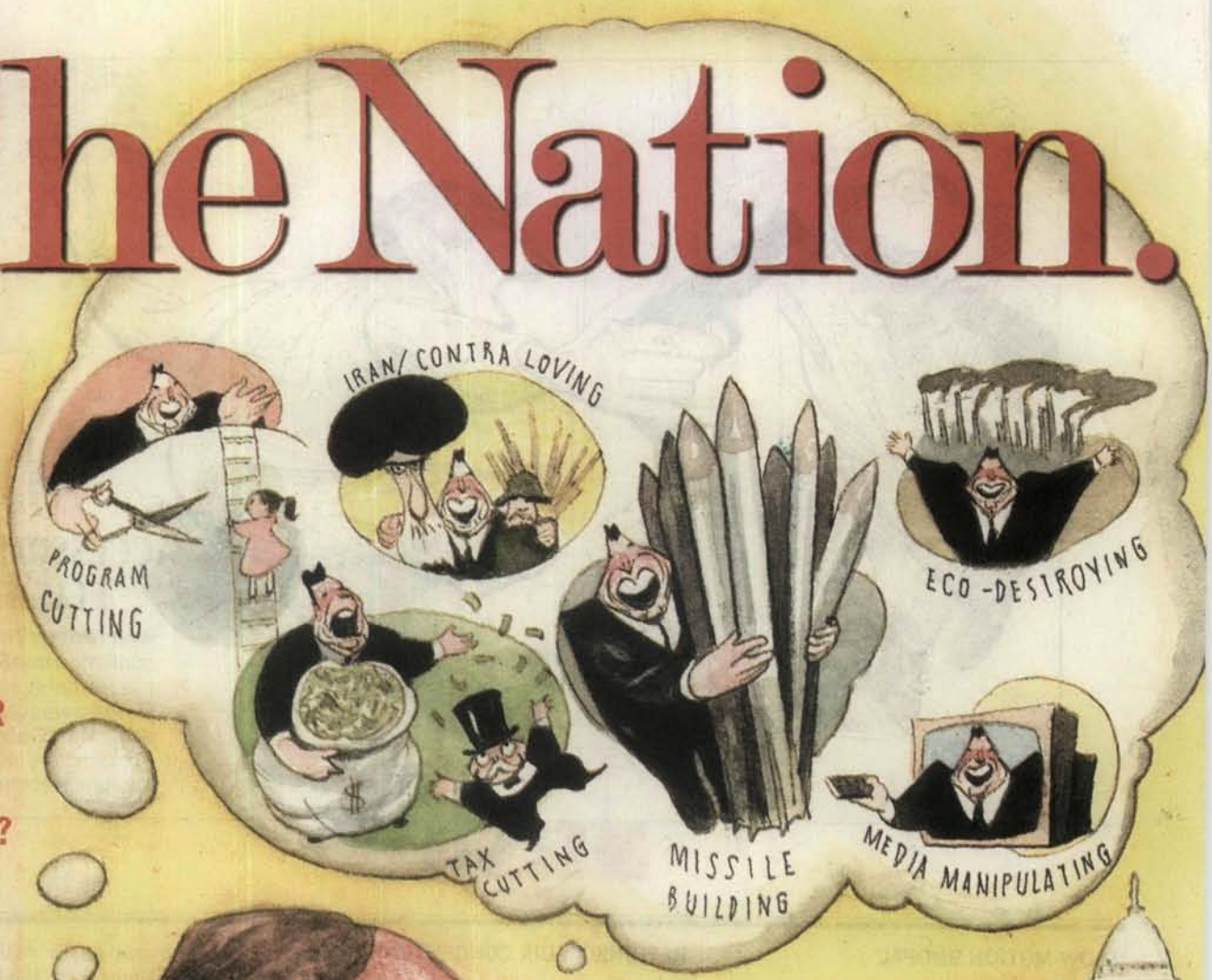
WILL LABOR TAKE THE WAL-MART CHALLENGE?
LIZA FEATHERSTONE

IN E.L. DOCTOROW'S AMERICA
David L. Ulin



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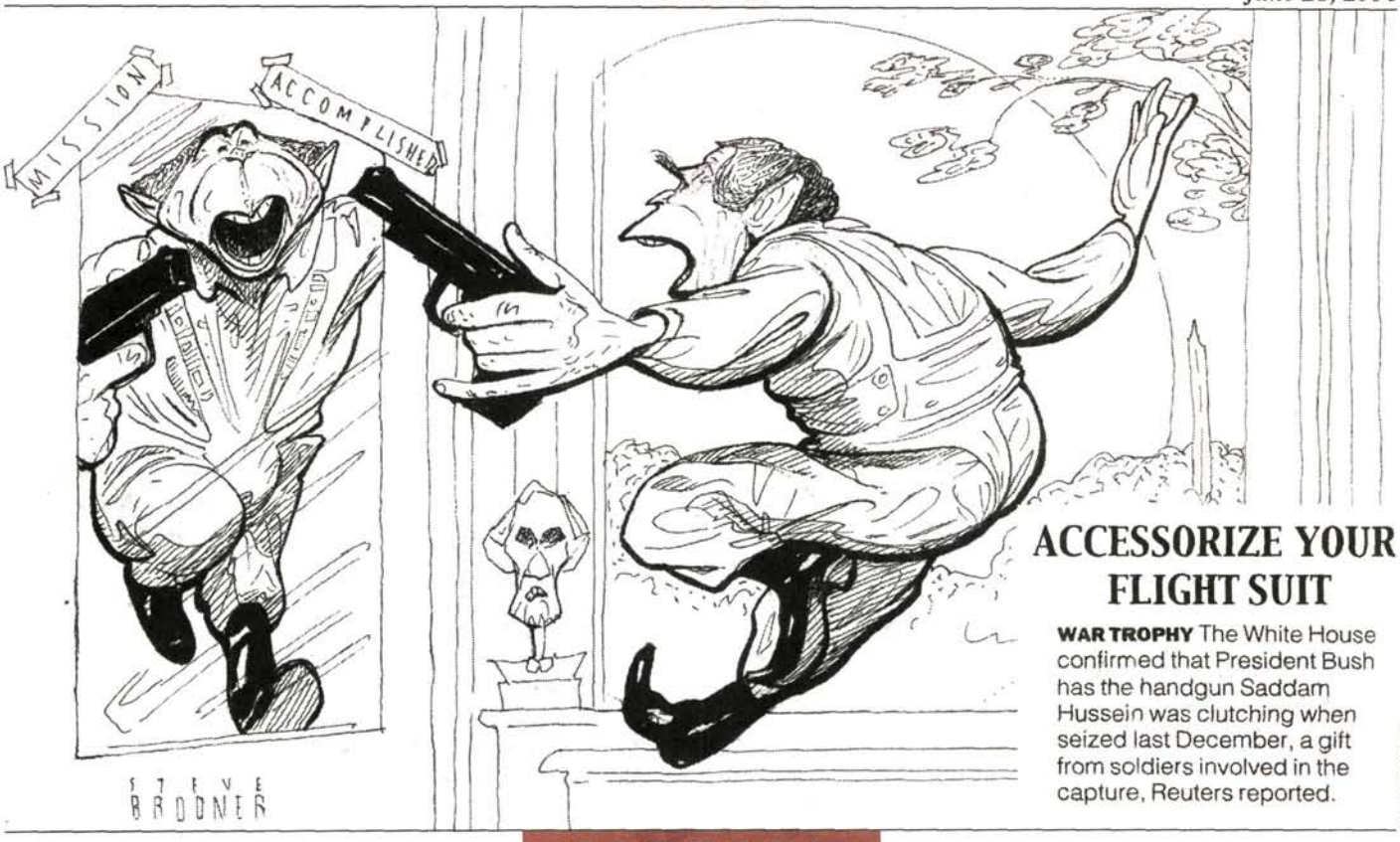

ACCESSORIZE YOUR FLIGHT SUIT

WAR TROPHY The White House confirmed that President Bush has the handgun Saddam Hussein was clutching when seized last December, a gift from soldiers involved in the capture, Reuters reported.

STEVE BRODNER

LETTERS

'SLOW-MOTION BHOPAL'

Edison, NJ

■ Thank you for Mark Hertsgaard's "Bhopal's Legacy" [May 24], on the struggle of the survivors to hold Union Carbide and its new owner, Dow Chemical, accountable for the world's worst industrial catastrophe. As an attorney representing the Bhopal victims in US federal court since 1999, I have been intimately involved in virtually all legal aspects of the survivors' struggle.

Discovery documents obtained from Union Carbide establish that the company transferred dangerously inadequate and unproven technology to its Indian affiliate, which not only caused the ghastly tragedy of 1984 but played the key role in triggering another "slow-motion Bhopal": the chemical contamination of at least ten residential communities through thousands of metric tons of chemicals dumped in a landfill in 1992. These pollutants have spread through the drinking water of nearly 20,000 people.

The survivors won an important victory last March in a decision from the Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit, which ruled that our claims against Carbide, including those for clean-up environmental remediation, should be allowed to proceed. Yet lack of sufficient public attention or outrage in the United States allows Union Carbide and Dow to adopt an intransigent attitude toward the Bhopal survivors, even as the companies resolve other claims against them from American plaintiffs for decades-old liabilities. H. RAJAN SHARMA

RETHINK MEDIA CONCENTRATION

New York City

■ Eric Alterman, in his May 24 "Stop the Presses" column, writes that the refusal of the Sinclair Broadcast Group to air *Nightline*'s listing of the Iraq war dead "demonstrated the dangers to democratic discourse of allowing too much media power to be concentrated in too few hands." But Sinclair isn't really a media giant; it owns sixty-two TV stations out of nearly 2,000 in the United States. ABC, the Disney-owned producer of *Nightline*, certainly is one of the biggies. And in this case, the biggie was closer to doing the right thing than the smaller outfit.

The media-concentration thesis is in need of a serious rethink. The country is full of regional chains that produce truly awful local newspapers; the major national dailies are far better. Instead of concentration, we should be talking about the kind of media produced by shareholder-owned companies operating in competitive markets under the discipline of maximizing profits. Concentration is often the natural byproduct of competition, as losers disappear or are taken over by winners. To focus on concentration alone is, as economists say, to misspecify the problem. DOUG HENWOOD

Left Business Observer

BLOCKING BLACK VOTES, THEN & NOW

Anchorage

■ With its sad details of the "spoiled" Florida ballots of African-American voters in 2000, Greg Palast's "Vanishing Votes" [May 17] shocks twice—once for the contemporary story it tells and again for the old one it recalls.

In the summer of 1964, while the most courageous of my generation went to Mississippi to register voters, I was one of five or six college students who spent our days squinting at fuzzy microfilm images of voter registration applications from Southern states. We were compiling data for the civil rights division of the Justice Department to help persuade Congress to enact the Voting Rights Act. The applications identified the would-be voters' race and required them to write a brief passage to demonstrate literacy. Our job was to classify the applications by race into four categories: applicants with apparent high literacy skills accepted; apparent high literacy skills rejected; apparent low literacy skills accepted; apparent low literacy skills rejected. We rarely found white applicants who had been rejected, even when their "tests" would have failed in fourth grade; and we rarely found African-Americans accepted, even when their applications showed high literacy skills.

People died in that summer's voter registration drives, and the following year Congress outlawed the use of literacy tests to screen voters. Now that we know how spoiled ballots and automated purges have replaced literacy tests, it's time to remember that we've lived through this story before. MARTHA WINNACKER

BROWN BY LAW

We heard from teachers, civil rights activists, professors, lawyers and regular folk on our May 3 "Brown at 50" issue on the fiftieth an-

(Continued on Page 27)

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IN THIS ISSUE

2 **LETTERS**

EDITORIALS & COMMENT

3 THE REAGAN LEGACY

4 A FLAWED RESOLUTION

5 THE GIPPER'S ECONOMY
William Greider

6 COLD WAR TO STAR WARS
Jonathan Schell

7 BELOVED BY THE MEDIA
Mark Hertsgaard

8 TAKING LIBERTIES
Outlaws on Torture
David Cole

28 SOLIDARITY IN WARTIME
David Bacon

COLUMNS

6 DEADLINE POET
Speculation on Reagan's Death...
Calvin Trillin

9 BEAT THE DEVIL
Reagan in Truth and Fiction
Alexander Cockburn

10 DIARY OF A MAD LAW PROFESSOR
To See or Not to See
Patricia J. Williams

ARTICLES

11 WILL LABOR TAKE THE WAL-MART CHALLENGE?
Under the gun, unions are realizing they have to think outside the big box.
Liza Featherstone

17 FEAR OF A BROWN PLANET
A wave of minority politics is cresting in California—white minority politics.
Roberto Lovato

21 WHERE ARE THE JOCKS FOR JUSTICE?
Cultural changes and lucrative endorsements may explain a drop in activism.
Kelly Candaele and Peter Dreier

25 LETTER FROM CAMBODIA
Still recovering from the Khmer Rouge.
Noy Thrupkaew

BOOKS & THE ARTS

29 DOCTOROW: Sweet Land Stories
David L. Ulin

33 LARKIN: Collected Poems
Melanie Rehak

36 GOPNIK, ED.: Americans In Paris: A Literary Anthology
Brenda Wineapple

40 HAYDEN: Building Suburbia: Green Fields and Urban Growth, 1820–2000
HAYDEN: A Field Guide to Sprawl
Eric Klinenberg

44 Morning Ritual (poem)
Victoria Chang

Cover and page 2 art by Steve Brodner; cover design by Stephen Kling/ Avenging Angels; illustrations by Lisa Blackshear

EDITORIALS

The Reagan Legacy

It's as if Gore Vidal coined the phrase "United States of Amnesia" for the moment of Ronald Reagan's death. Journalists, commentators and politicians gushed about this "optimistic" man of "vitality" who demonstrated a profound "love of his country" and single-handedly revived "patriotism." Most of the media coverage was a romanticized hail-to-the-chief celebration of a majestic figure rather than a realistic examination of what this man did for, or to, the country and the world.

The end of Reagan's life was sad. His family, like many others, went through a decadelong trauma as it watched Alzheimer's claim their loved one. (We applaud Nancy Reagan's effort to persuade George W. Bush to lift the restrictions he imposed on stem-cell research to placate the religious right.) But death, however it comes, does not warrant the rewriting of a life. And until the current occupant side-stepped into the White House, Reagan was the worst American leader since Herbert Hoover.

It would be impossible in this space to catalogue all the damage Reagan wrought in eight years. The standard line is that he won the cold war, but elsewhere in this issue Jonathan Schell corrects that notion. It is also worth noting that this man who yearned so much for freedom and democracy in Soviet-bloc nations showed limited concern for democracy and human rights in other parts of the globe. After Democrats and Republicans in Congress passed sanctions against the apartheid government of South Africa, Reagan vetoed the measure. His Administration cuddled up with the fascistic and anti-Semitic junta of Argentina and backed militaries in El Salvador and Guatemala that massacred civilians. It moved to normalize relations with Augusto Pinochet, the tyrant of Chile. Reagan sent George Bush the First to the Philippines, where the Vice President toasted dictator Ferdinand Marcos for fostering "democracy." Pursuing a quasi-secret war against the Sandinista government in Nicaragua, the Reagan Administration violated international law and circumvented Congress to support *contra* rebels engaged in human rights abuses and, according to the CIA's own Inspector General, worked with suspected drug traffickers. Reagan covertly sent arms to the mullahs of Iran and courted Saddam Hussein, even after his use of chemical weapons. He appointed officials who claimed nuclear war was winnable, thus raising the chances that miscalculations by the Soviet Union or the United States would plunge the world into chaos.

On the home front Reagan was almost as divisive and disingenuous as the second Bush, as William Greider recounts on page 5. His deficit-causing supply-side tax cuts (derided by the elder Bush as "voodoo economics") were sold with phony numbers and sleight-of-hand accounting. These "trickle-down" tax cuts—coupled with a tremendous boost in military spending—were designed to bankrupt the government, pressuring it to reduce government spending and thereby justifying draconian cuts in social programs. (Remember ketchup as a vegetable?)

Reagan showed little concern for the deindustrialized workers who suffered during the 1980s, and he was actively hostile to unions, firing PATCO air-traffic controllers en masse after they struck for better pay and working conditions. His Attorney General, Edwin Meese, displayed little regard for civil liberties, noting, "You don't

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have many suspects who are innocent of a crime." His Interior Secretary, James Watt, fancied dead trees over live ones. And no one in the Reagan White House appeared to care about a new pandemic that mainly killed homosexuals. Reagan's inaction and bigotry against gays and drug-users led to tens of thousands of deaths that might have been avoided if he had moved earlier.

Reagan effectively installed a revolving door at the White House through which key advisers passed on their way to lucrative jobs as lobbyists—and subsequent indictments for influence peddling. Despite his Administration's "law and order" language, by the 1990s nearly 200 Reagan-era officials had faced investigation and prosecution. Special prosecutor Lawrence Walsh's conclusion that Reagan had "created the conditions which made possible the crimes committed by others" in the Iran/*contra* scandal holds true for the more widespread lack of ethical standards. His Administration weakened workplace safety standards. He presided over an S&L scandal that stuck taxpayers with a bill approaching a trillion dollars. He appointed Antonin Scalia to the Supreme Court. He tried to gut the Civil Rights Commission, and his Administration waged a relentless series of attacks on affirmative action while trying to grant tax-exempt status to private schools that engaged in racial discrimination.

A Flawed Resolution

With its blueprint for Iraq in tatters, the Bush Administration has been forced to recognize the United Nations as the only body that can confer legitimacy on its continued occupation. In contrast to its disdainful dismissal of the views of the UN before the war, the White House repeatedly gave ground to win support of a Security Council resolution approving a new interim government.

In addition to agreeing to give Iraqi leaders control over their own security forces, the White House was forced to consent to a specific time limit for the multinational force it will command and to give the Iraqi government the right to ask American troops to leave before the expiration of the mandate on January 1, 2006. It also moved a little on the question of Iraqi control over US military actions, agreeing to consult and coordinate about fundamental issues, including "policy on sensitive offensive operations." This is progress of a sort, a small victory for multilateralism and global politics by negotiation.

Despite the resolution, realities on the ground cannot be denied: The interim government is a creature of the United States, and US troops will still be viewed as an occupying force, with all the potential for violence that entails. Iraqis overwhelmingly want to run their own affairs, and they want US troops to leave. The UN, by bestowing its imprimatur, has provided an illusion of legitimacy, but events are likely to render that illusion temporary.

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COMMENT

Reagan, to a limited degree, had the ability to transcend ideology when reality intruded. When conservatives warned that Mikhail Gorbachev was a fraud with a stealth plan to destroy the United States, Reagan overcame his own history of right-wing dogmatism and negotiated with the Soviet leader. And after his tax cuts yielded enormous deficits, he went along with tax hikes to stop the fiscal bleeding (he apparently persuaded himself that he and Congress were merely closing loopholes). But such moments were far outnumbered by others suggesting at best a shaky grip on reality; he often seemed to live in a world of his own—with *Reader's Digest* his only news source.

But he won two presidential elections commandingly, and over the course of several decades inspired a devoted following that now wants to etch his name and image on currency, public buildings and monuments across the land. He won by displaying an optimism about his ideology that most right-leaning politicians before him had lacked; voters, even when they didn't particularly like his ideas, liked Reagan himself, because he convinced them he believed in these ideas and in a noble vision of America.

Reagan once malapropped, "Facts are stupid things." He meant "stubborn," and we hope that they are, and that the facts of Reagan's presidency survive the hagiography now being written. His life, as the cliché-soaked commentators note incessantly, may have been an "American life." But his presidency was no morning in America; it empowered and enabled some of the worst elements of public life in our country: greed, arrogance, neglect and hypocrisy. This Reagan legacy, unfortunately, survives its namesake, and, worse, it has been enhanced by the son of his Vice President.

COMMENT

The Gipper's Economy

The Gipper had a certain goofiness about him that was impossible not to like. He told "war stories" borrowed from old movies with such sincerity you were sure he must have been there. He was a famous football hero ("win this one for the Gipper") and also a handsome cowboy depicted on horseback in his 1980 campaign posters (but without his six-shooters). He taught wacky science lessons (trees are a leading source of air pollution) and delivered many dewy-eyed tributes to American heroes, some plucked from yesterday's headlines, some recycled from his rheumy memories of World War I. Whether you came to canonize the man or ridicule him, he was always great material. Historians, I think, will someday rank him right up there with Warren Harding.

Reagan was a fabulist. He told stories—often charming, sometimes loony—in which sentimental images triumphed over facts, warmth over light. So it is entirely appropriate today that the major media, draped in mourning, are solemnly fictionalizing his presidency. Reagan spun them around brilliantly, used the White House reporters and cameras as hapless props in his melodrama, ignored the tough questions and stuck unyieldingly to his scripted version of reality. This was partly conviction, partly the discipline of an "old pro" movie actor. It appears to have worked with the press. Their memorials to the "Ronald Reagan story" sound more like his fables than the events I witnessed.

What's left out? For one thing, a chilling meanness lurked at the core of Reagan's political agenda (always effectively concealed by the affability), and he used this meanness like a razor blade to advance his main purpose—delegitimizing the federal government. Race was one cutting edge, poverty was another. His famous metaphor—the "welfare queen" who rode around in her Cadillac collecting food stamps—was perfectly pitched to the smoldering social resentments but also a clever fit with his broader economic objectives. Stop wasting our money on those lazy, shiftless (and, always unspoken, black) people. Get government off our backs, encourage the strong, forget the weak. In case any white guys missed the point, Reagan opened his 1980 campaign in Neshoba County, Mississippi, where three civil rights workers had been murdered in the 1960s. His speech extolled states' rights. The tone was sunny optimism.

The chemistry worked partly because it coincided with a historical shift already under way. Beyond movie scripts, Reagan was authentic in his convictions—he brought the flint-hearted libertarian doctrines of Hayek and Friedman to Washington and put a smiling face on the market orthodoxy of "every man for himself." Democrats had lost their energy and inventiveness, they were associated with twenty years of contentious reforms, turmoil and conflict (and sought relief, not by rebuilding their popular base with new ideas but by cozying up to the business lobbies). In the end, the only folks who got truly liberated by Reaganomics were the same people who had financed his rise in politics, the Daddy Warbucks moguls from California and corporate behemoths like General Electric.

Reagan's theory was really "trickle down" economics borrowed from the Republican 1920s (Harding-Coolidge-Hoover) and renamed "supply side." Cut tax rates for the wealthy; everyone else will benefit. As Reagan's budget director David Stockman confided to me at the time, the supply-side rhetoric "was always a Trojan horse to bring down the top rate." Many middle-class and poor citizens figured it out, even if reporters did not.

Reagan's great accomplishment was ideological—propelling the ascendancy of the right—but the actual governing results always looked more like hoary old interest-group politics. Wealthy individuals, corporate and financial interests got extraordinary benefits (tax reductions and deregulation) while the bottom half got whacked whenever an opportunity arose. His original proposition—cut taxes regressively, double military spending, shrink government and balance the federal budget—looked cockeyed from the start. Yet when the logic self-destructed in practice, conservatives were remarkably content, since they had delivered the boodle to the right clients. After my notorious account of Reagan's economic failure, based on my conversations with Stockman, was published in the December 1981 *Atlantic Monthly*, the Gipper likened me to John Hinckley, the would-be assassin who shot him. So much for Mr. Nice Guy.

Both parties would spend the next twenty years cleaning up after the Gipper's big mistake. They collaborated in an ongoing politics of bait and switch—raising taxes massively on work-

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COMMENT

ing people through the Social Security payroll tax while continuing to cut taxes for the more affluent and to whittle down government aid for anyone else. The Gipper had taught Washington an important new technique for governing—how to fog regressive tax cuts past the general public without arousing voter retribution (the media can be counted on to assist). The trickery continues to succeed. Pre-Reagan politics used to address various economic inequities. The great injustice confronted by George W. Bush was the estate tax on millionaires.

Reagan's stubborn optimism did refresh the national spirit, no question, and it certainly powered his political successes. He gave us a television-era remake of Warren Harding's "return to normalcy." But in hindsight, I have come to think that the illusions fostered by his sunny messages perhaps did the gravest economic damage. Things were not normal, they were deteriorating and leading toward a chasm of growing inequalities. The rending of the American middle class, the stagnation of industrial wages, the relentless loss of US manufacturing—these great wounds to general prosperity were all visible during the Reagan era, but instead of addressing them honestly, his policies further aggravated the consequences. The Gipper insisted, no doubt sincerely, that it was "morning again in America." People wanted to believe this, and politicians of both parties learned from his cue—wave the flag and avoid bad news. Ronald Reagan launched the great era of false triumphalism that continues to this day among American leaders. The current generation lacks his charm and is therefore less successful at hiding the truth. WILLIAM GREIDER

Cold War to Star Wars

Perhaps the most important question—for present policymakers as well as historians—posed by the presidency of Ronald Reagan is what role he played in ending the cold war. And perhaps the most illuminating recent article on this question is one written by Wesley Clark for *Washington Monthly* just before Reagan died. A mistaken belief that the Soviet Union was brought down chiefly by US military pressure, Clark believes, has led the group of neoconservatives now in charge of American policy to think military action can now bring democracy to the Middle East. The result is the fiasco under way in Iraq. Clark acknowledges that the Reagan military buildup played a role in the Soviet turnaround under Mikhail Gorbachev. Soviet military backwardness was perhaps the most sharply painful aspect of the Soviet Union's growing technical lag behind the United States, and the Reagan military buildup intensified it. But far more important than the buildup, Clark argues, was the long policy of containment that preceded it. And more important still was the long, slow, scarcely visible but decisive loss of faith in the Soviet empire by the peoples living under its rule. It burst into view with the rise of the Solidarity movement in Poland. Then came the astonishingly creative, nonviolent response from Gorbachev: his call for a "new thinking," which put the interests of peace and survival above imperial or ideological interest; his commitment to installing openness and respect for human rights in Soviet policy; his wholesale *perestroika* of the Soviet system. In a word, the collapse of the Soviet Union occurred more for political than for military reasons. That is why the end, when it came, could, in a surprise as great as the collapse itself, occur almost entirely without violence.

Reagan had been prescient early in his term in foreseeing the dimensions of the Soviet crisis; yet when it came he was at first blind to it. The Administration's hard line toward the Soviet Union continued right up to the edge of the Reykjavik summit, in October 1986. Just before the meeting, Richard Solomon, director of policy planning at the State Department, informed Reagan in a memorandum, "Dynamic Mr. Gorbachev and his attractive wife may turn out to be no more capable of 'new thinking' than Mr. Khrushchev was of burying Stalin." It was not until the summit itself that, to his great credit, Reagan began to understand that the rise of Gorbachev to the leadership of the Soviet Union heralded fundamental change.

Gorbachev and Reagan turned out to be in agreement on a surprising point that goes unmentioned in the encomiums of today's hawks. Both men believed that the abolition of nuclear weapons was not only necessary for the survival of civilization but also possible. At Reykjavik, to the horror of many of their advisers, they set about exploring whether they could make their dream a reality. Reagan observed to an eager Gorbachev that if they started the process of reducing their nuclear forces to zero, and would "stand shoulder to shoulder in telling other nations that they must eliminate their own nuclear weapons, it would be hard to think of a country that would not do so." Gorbachev agreed. The two were aware that the opportunity, if not seized, would pass: Other crises would arise, new leaders would come to power.

What got in the way was Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative ("Star Wars")—his plan to protect the United States and even the world from nuclear attack by intercepting incoming rockets. The layers of paradox in this failure are dense. It was SDI that had helped Reagan become an abolitionist in the first place. Nations could give up nuclear arms, he believed, because they would be protected from nuclear rogues and cheaters by the defenses. Yet it was also SDI that prevented Reagan from achieving an abolition agreement. Gorbachev, fearing that the Soviet Union could

CALVIN TRILLIN

CONCERNING SPECULATION ON THE POLITICAL IMPACT OF PRESIDENT RONALD REAGAN'S DEATH

Though theories of conspiracy crop up,
In fairness, one of them should be dissolved.
He died not in October but in June;
It should be clear that Rove was not involved.

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COMMENT

never match America's defensive achievements, would not surrender his existing parity in offensive nuclear arms. Yet SDI was a delusion. Twenty years and some $80 billion later, nothing remotely resembling it is even on the drawing board. Reagan was as mistaken in placing his faith in it as Gorbachev was in fearing it. Either man could have safely given way. Both should have.

But on this occasion of mourning, let us not speak ill of the dead. Instead, let's remember the nuclear-abolitionist, peace-minded Reagan forgotten by his hawkish hagiographers. At one moment in Reykjavik, as Michael Mazo records in a Yale University master's thesis, Reagan and Gorbachev imagined that they would meet once again in Iceland, in ten years, and each would bring his country's last nuclear-armed missile with him. The vision prompted a flight of fancy by President Reagan, according to the official record: "Then they would have a tremendous party for the whole world. Gorbachev interjected that he thought the two sides were close to reaching a common formula.... The President continued to describe his vision of their meeting in Iceland ten years from now. He would be very old by then and Gorbachev would not recognize him. The President would say, 'Hello, Mikhail.' And Gorbachev would say, 'Ron, is it you?' And then they would destroy the last missiles."

JONATHAN SCHELL

Jonathan Schell is the Harold Willens Peace Fellow at the Nation Institute.

Beloved by the Media

Ronald Reagan lived a charmed life in many respects, none more so than in his relationship with the news media. Indeed, his accomplishments as President are impossible to understand without recognizing the way he and his advisers turned the media, especially television, into a national megaphone for his policies. Most obituaries of Reagan have noted the decisive role that public relations played in his White House, and it's true that the former actor's PR apparatus pioneered or perfected many of the news-management techniques now taken for granted by press and public alike. The media's own complicity in the process has generally gone unmentioned, however, perhaps because it is journalists who write the obituaries. Although the Reagan White House did not shrink from censoring news, most famously during the 1983 invasion of Grenada, the taming of the media during the Reagan years was mostly self-inflicted.

Reagan's own advisers admitted as much. Reagan was called the Teflon President because blame never stuck to him, an outcome reporters attributed to his sunny personality. But David Gergen, the former White House communications director, told me, "A lot of the Teflon came because the press was holding back. I don't think they wanted to go after him that toughly." Ben Bradlee, former executive editor of the *Washington Post*, agreed: "We have been kinder to President Reagan than any President...since I've been at the *Post*."

In *On Bended Knee*, a book about the press and Reagan based on interviews with scores of journalists, news executives and Administration officials, I documented numerous cases of self-censorship. The management of CBS News, allegedly the most liberal of America's TV networks, ordered its Washington bureau—in particular White House correspondent Lesley Stahl—to tone down criticism of Reagan because ordinary Americans supposedly didn't want to hear it. At the *New York Times*, correspondent Raymond Bonner was pulled off the Central America beat after his exposé of a civilian massacre by US-trained forces in El Salvador angered Administration officials and their right-wing allies at the *Wall Street Journal* editorial page. A camera crew for ABC News filmed troops on their way to Grenada and got confirmation of the impending invasion from US officials in the region, but their executive producer in New York trusted an off-the-record denial by the Pentagon more than his own reporters and killed the story.

But the friendly coverage of Reagan usually had less dramatic explanations. One was technical: Reagan and his PR apparatus knew how to get their desired message across while satisfying the media's appetite for interesting stories and appealing visuals. The apparatus understood the value of repetition— in an information-saturated society, only messages that get repeated can pierce the static and register on the public consciousness—and they pursued it with discipline and skill. Reagan's PR was planned months in advance and fine-tuned every morning in meetings that set "the line of the day," which the Administration's spokesman would duly repeat to reporters. The settings of the President's public appearances were carefully controlled—he stood before flattering backdrops and too far away for reporters to ask questions.

A second, more profound, source of the friendly coverage was ideological. In the United States, the media shape mass opinion but tend to reflect elite opinion, and most of the nation's elite either supported Reagan or were afraid to criticize him. This was true not only of the executives who employed the journalists covering Reagan but also of most Democrats. Because the doctrine of objectivity prevents reporters from saying the sky is blue without citing an official source, they look to the opposition party for quotes and perspectives to counter the White House's claims. The coverage of any President, therefore, tends to be only as critical as the opposition party is. The failure of Democrats to criticize Reagan meant he faced relatively uncritical coverage (just as Republicans' aggressiveness led to relatively tough coverage of Bill Clinton). This dynamic was especially helpful to Reagan on foreign policy, where Democrats feared that any criticism would make them look insufficiently tough. Thus, when Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev unilaterally halted nuclear testing and invited Reagan to do the same, the halt went unreported in the United States for months until Gorbachev extended it a second and third time, when it was finally mentioned but dismissed by ABC News correspondent Sam Donaldson as "nothing but propaganda."

In the American system of checks and balances, it is not the media's job to be for or against any President, but it *is* their job to make the reality, rather than the spin, of the President's policies clear so citizens can decide intelligently whether to support them. This the media largely failed to do during the Reagan years. And as in so many fields, the right-wing offensive Reagan launched continues to shape American life. His deregulation of broadcasting gave rise to today's hyper-monopolized media industry, while

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COMMENT

his attacks on the supposed bias of the press has journalists bending over backward to prove they're not liberals. Because he changed the world so profoundly, Reagan will be remembered as one of the two or three most important Presidents of the twentieth century. But he could have accomplished none of this without the help of the American media. MARK HERTSGAARD

Mark Hertsgaard, The Nation*'s environment correspondent, is the author of* On Bended Knee: The Press and the Reagan Presidency *and* The Eagle's Shadow: Why America Fascinates and Infuriates the World.

Outlaws on Torture

IN THE NAME OF LIBERTIES

The "war on terrorism" is in trouble, and at the very moment the Bush Administration needs it most—election season. George W. Bush has decided to stake his campaign on his ability to protect us. But this strategy may well fail, as with each passing day we learn of another reason to doubt the Administration's ability to keep us secure.

Take the Justice Department's recent revelations about José Padilla, the US citizen it has held as an "enemy combatant," without charges or trial, for two years. When Padilla was first locked up, the Administration provided only the sketchiest details. But after the Supreme Court displayed skepticism about the government's position, the Administration chose to disclose new information to show that Padilla really is a "bad guy." Deputy Attorney General James Comey insisted that the timing—one month before the Supreme Court is to rule—was mere coincidence.

But leaving aside the fact that we've never been able to hear Padilla's side of the story, everything the government disclosed about his alleged activities, Comey admitted, would be inadmissible in court. That's because it's all the result of coerced confessions, which are notoriously unreliable. Some information was obtained through a two-year incommunicado interrogation of Padilla, designed, by the government's own admission, to coerce him into talking by rendering him without hope and wholly dependent on his captors. The rest comes from Al Qaeda figures held in undisclosed CIA locations, where interrogators, among other tactics, reportedly push suspects under water until they think they're drowning in order to encourage cooperation.

On June 7 and 8, the *Wall Street Journal* and *Washington Post* disclosed the existence of two legal memos from the Defense and Justice departments arguing that the President is not subject to the international and federal bans on torture whenever he acts "pursuant to his commander-in-chief authority" and that military officials are also immune from prosecution if they believe they are following orders. In this view, the President is bound by no law. He can make up the rules as he goes along and then simply find an eager lawyer to write a secret memo justifying his actions. The Defense Department memo has now been leaked, but Attorney General Ashcroft refused to disclose even to Congress the memo from his agency.

The Administration has sought to downplay the memos as mere think-pieces not necessarily acted upon. But the whole world has now seen evidence that the thoughts were translated into action. The Administration appears to have made a calculated decision that physical coercion and humiliation were warranted in order to get "actionable intelligence" from its detainees. Abu Ghraib was the result. Yet according to military officials interviewed by the *New York Times*, the interrogations at Abu Ghraib "yielded very little valuable intelligence."

Meanwhile, at home and abroad, the detention of people having no connection to terrorism has become routine. The Justice Department recently admitted that it had erroneously locked up an American lawyer of Muslim faith, Brandon Mayfield, as a "material witness." It did so on the basis of a fingerprint match to the Madrid bombing site that the FBI characterized as a "100 percent identification" until it conceded, two weeks after Mayfield had been detained, that it was a 100 percent mistake.

And Mayfield is not alone. Of the more than 5,000 foreign nationals jailed in the United States since September 11 in anti-terrorism "preventive-detention" measures, only three have been charged with any terrorist crime. Two of the three were acquitted at trial of the terrorist charges. And the lone conviction is under a legal cloud because the prosecution failed to turn over to the defense evidence that its principal witness lied on the stand. Our record is not much better overseas. Military intelligence officers told the Red Cross that 70 to 90 percent of the people locked up in Iraq had been arrested by mistake.

The justification for these and other shortcuts on human rights is always that they are necessary to make us more secure. But even on those terms, there is little tangible evidence that the deten-

(Continued on Page 28)

NATION NOTES

With this issue, Liza Featherstone joins the masthead as a contributing editor. Featherstone, whose story on Wal-Mart appears on page 11, has covered student, youth, labor, feminist and antiwar movements for us. She is co-author of *Students Against Sweatshops*. Her latest book, *Selling Women Short: The Landmark Battle for Workers' Rights at Wal-Mart*, will appear in November.

* * *

THIS WEEK ON THE WEB. Had enough Reagan cheerleading? Go to www.thenation.com for a therapeutic dose of contrarianism from our archives, including: Andrew Kopkind's "The Age of Reaganism," a prophetic look at how we got where we are today; E.L. Doctorow's "The Rise of Ronald Reagan"; Mark Green on "Reagan's Cowboy Capitalism"; Ronnie Dugger on "Ronald Reagan and the Imperial Presidency"; Abbie Hoffman on "Reefer Madness"; and David Corn's classic "66 Things to Think About When Flying Into Reagan National Airport."

The *Nation* button contest is down to six finalists. Visit www.thenation.com/button to vote for your favorite. Winners will be announced on June 23.

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ALEXANDER COCKBURN

Reagan in Truth and Fiction

Nixon thought Reagan was "strange" and, so he told the secret tape recorder in the Oval Office in 1972, "just an uncomfortable man to be around." The late President certainly was a very weird human being, not at all like the fellow being hailed this week as the man who gave America back its sense of confidence and destiny after the Carter years.

The ceremonial schedule for Reagan's corpse the week after his death had it lying "in repose" for several days. What else was it supposed to be doing? Anyway, Reagan always stuck to his script, and even if he had come to in the presidential library in Simi Valley, he would have stayed with his allotted role and lain doggo.

Reagan was "in repose" much of his second term, his day easing forward through a forgiving schedule of morning nap, afternoon snooze, TV supper and early bed. He couldn't recall the names of many of his aides, even of his dog. Stories occasionally swirled around Washington that his aides pondered from time to time whether to invoke the Twenty-fifth Amendment. I saw him at the Republican convention in New Orleans in August of 1988, where he sat in his presidential box entirely immobile, with the kind of somber passivity one associates with the shrouded figure in some newly opened Egyptian tomb before oxygen commences its mission of decay. I never saw him being "sunny," a favorite adjective of the hagiographers. As an orator or "communicator" he was terrible, with one turgid cliché following another, delivered in a folksy drone punctuated by wags of the head.

There was no internationally recognized border in Reagan's mind between fantasy and fact, the dividing line having been abolished in the early 1940s when his studio's PR department turned him into a war hero, courtesy of his labors in "Fort Wacky" in Culver City, where they made training films. The fanzines disclosed the loneliness of R.R.'s first wife, Jane Wyman, her absent man (a few miles away in Fort Wacky, home by suppertime) and her knowledge of R.R.'s hatred of the foe. "She'd seen Ronnie's sick face," *Modern Screen* reported in 1942, bent over photos of starved babies in Poland, gritting between "set lips" that "this would make it a pleasure to kill." A photographer for *Modern Screen* recalled later that Reagan wished to be photographed on his front step in full uniform, kissing his wife goodbye.

Reagan had absolutely no moral sense about truth or falsity. Forty years after Fort Wacky, as Commander in Chief, R.R. told Yitzhak Shamir, then prime minister of Israel, that he had helped to liberate Auschwitz, had returned to Hollywood with film footage of the ghastly scenes he had witnessed, and if in later years anyone controverted the reality of the Holocaust over the Reagan dinner table, he would roll the footage till the doubts were stilled. It was all fantasy, but I'm sure Reagan believed it, the same way he regarded his trip to the SS cemetery in Bitburg as a useful reminder to Europeans of the great days of World War II, when the people of the Free World—American, British, French and German—fought shoulder to shoulder against Soviet totalitarianism.

The problem for the press was that Reagan didn't really care that he'd been caught out with another set of phony statistics or a bogus anecdote about Auschwitz. Truth, for him, was what he happened to be saying at the time. When the Iran/*contra* scandal broke, he held a press conference in which he said to Helen Thomas, "I want to get to the bottom of this and find out all that has happened. And so far, I've told you all that I know and, you know, the truth of the matter is, for quite some time, all that you knew was what I'd told you." He had a sound belief in astrology, the stars being the twinkling penumbra of his incandescent belief in the "free market," with whose motions it was blasphemous to tamper. He believed Armageddon was right around the corner.

After Jimmy Carter's timid efforts to make America adjust to late-twentieth-century realities, Reagan installed fantasy as the motor of national consciousness, and it's still pumping disastrously along. He was an awful President, never as popular as the press pretended, presiding over a carnival of corruption and greed at home, terror in Central America and Africa. On March 23, 1983, a friend of mine watched as a naval officer and a defense contractor in the Fort Myer Officers' Club in Virginia listened impatiently as Reagan churned his way through a longish overture to his excited launch of Star Wars. Then, as Reagan began to token forth the billion-dollar feeding trough of SDI, they screamed to each other in incredulous delight, "He's going to do it...he's doing it...he's done it! We're rich, we're rich!" With these words, they both made a rush to the telephones.

There were many such shouts of joy for the rich down through Reagan-time and beyond. The East Coast elite distrusted him as late as the 1980 campaign, trying to head off his nomination by running Gerald Ford again. Learning of the Ford bid, Reagan turned to an aide and cried, "What have they got against me? I support big oil. I support big business. Why don't they trust me?" Probably because they thought he would blow them up, along with everyone else. He didn't, but they never did trust him, though they had a hell of a party while he was around.

The people who did trust Reagan were mostly white men, small-business owners, some (sometimes many) construction workers, many ordinary folk up and down the map who wanted a world much as it had been in the 1950s. Them he betrayed.

As Reagan shambled toward the stairway of Air Force One at Andrews Air Force Base on Inauguration Day, 1989, Bryant Gumbel mused to Tom Brokaw that this seemed to him "quite remarkable." It turned out that Gumbel was mightily impressed that the 78-year-old Reagan had not sought to stave off retirement by mounting a coup d'état. All around the world, Gumbel said, leaders "cling to power." James Baker, the man who, with Paul Volcker, ran the world for Reagan, probably could have done it. The press would have gone along. As it was, Baker just bided his time for twelve years. ■

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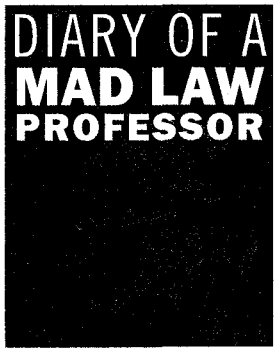
PATRICIA J. WILLIAMS

To See or Not to See



Boston's Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority recently announced a new policy of stopping people "randomly" to request identification from those whom police believe to be acting "suspiciously"; they will also be asking to check packages and bags "at random." In New York City, meanwhile, the MTA has instituted a new policy forbidding cameras anywhere in the subway. One angry photographer protesting the ban cited a friend who was questioned by police after taking a picture of his wife near the Whitestone Bridge. Apparently in response to recent scandals, Donald Rumsfeld has issued a ban on all digital cameras, cell phones with digital cameras and camcorders from all military compounds. And on the planetary line of defense, the Pentagon, having had the foresight to purchase the right to publish satellite photographs of Earth a few years ago, has never disseminated the same—thus removing aerial photos of hotspots like Afghanistan from the public realm. Although the contracts are said to have expired, John Pike of globalsecurity.org says that imaging companies don't want to "gratuitously annoy their biggest customer, the US military. These companies are run by businessmen, not crusading journalists."

Down on the ground, a Pakistani immigrant was detained after he asked a stranger to snap a picture of him amid the fall foliage of upstate New York. The lovely colors were reflected in the lapping pool of a water-treatment plant; the stranger thought he might be casing the joint and called the police. At the borders, it is not only citizens of designated countries who are scrutinized and detained but also artwork, music and books. Curators, conductors and academics are frustrated in their ability to plan for conferences or shows involving work shipped from places like Cuba, Africa, the Middle East.

The flip side to all this banning and blindfolding is that the police have cameras trained on the public all over New York City. Private security firms have cameras guarding every inch of work and shopping space. Antiterrorism measures allow law enforcement to "sneak and peek" into private homes and personal computers based on the suspicions of individual officers, without judicial oversight or accountability. Not that oversight will help in a time of panic: As of this writing, an art professor at the University of Buffalo named Stephen Kurtz awaits the outcome of a grand jury investigation into his series of gallery installations protesting the genetic modification of food. When Kurtz's wife died recently of a heart condition, the paramedic who came to his home saw petri dishes and a DNA extractor used to analyze food for possible genetic alteration. The paramedic reported him to the FBI, who confiscated the extractor, his computer and papers, as well as his wife's body. Although nothing hazardous was found, a grand jury has been convened to consider whether he should be prosecuted under a provision of the "US Biological Weapons Anti-Terrorism Act of 1989," a law recently expanded by the USA Patriot Act to prohibit the possession of "any biological agent, toxin, or delivery system" that has no "prophylactic, protective, bona fide research, or other peaceful purpose."

Perhaps the emergence of this lumbering Panopticon wouldn't be quite so worrisome if we could be sure that there was equality of sneaking and peeking. Given specific events like the upcoming conventions and election, most of us might not mind if guards searched everyone who entered the subway, regardless of race, religion or rank. Since that is obviously impossible—we depend on a transit system that transports rather than grinds to a standstill—most of us also probably would accept random, truly random, searches as a more efficient deterrent. For example, we wouldn't be so bothered if officials were stopping not just brown people "randomly" but, say, every third person through the turnstile, or everyone with a backpack—if, in other words, the winnowing were consistently neutral. But "random" is often employed as though it were synonymous with the idle suspicions of individual officers—despite history attesting to the manner in which free-floating "suspicion" is too frequently a cipher for ethnic stereotyping, racial voyeurism, unconstitutional animus.

Conducting the searches and manning the cameras are so many security guards, private contractors, prison wardens, housing police, sheriffs and regular police. A random sampling of law-enforcement personnel would no doubt reveal ordinary Americans: They pray to God, beat their spouses, pay their taxes, molest their children and love their dogs at approximately the same frequency as everyone else. Some of them are well-trained professionals, some barely more than neglected, out-of-control kids, like Lynndie England. For better or worse, they carry within them the likes, prejudices, violence and ideals of our very complex society. Some of them live next door. Some want to make sure you never get within twenty miles of their neighborhood. Some believe that you are the Antichrist. Some want to marry your daughter.

But all that personal preference and human idiosyncrasy is beside the point if they conform to reasonably clear guidelines informed by as broad a range of public input and oversight as possible. If, on the other hand, the network of information gatherers and secret surveillers is allowed to become an ever more closed society and to indulge their own prejudices and paranoia, we will see a very different, if no less human, reaction: the increased conforming of our society to the standards of sober bureaucrats, information analysts so narrowly focused as to be narrow-minded, media rumor-mills and traumatized military men. Our homes, backpacks, offices, pockets and cars will have to be suitably sanitized of books they haven't read, of science they don't understand, of art that unsettles them, of looks that trigger flashbacks and of ideas that are so creative as to seem foreign.

We must not cede the power to witness what is happening to us, to know how we are seen, to oversee our own representation. Without that freedom, we must recognize ourselves in the awful words spoken by the despairing family of one Iraqi man who has disappeared into US custody: "It's because they have absolute force. No one sees what they do." ■

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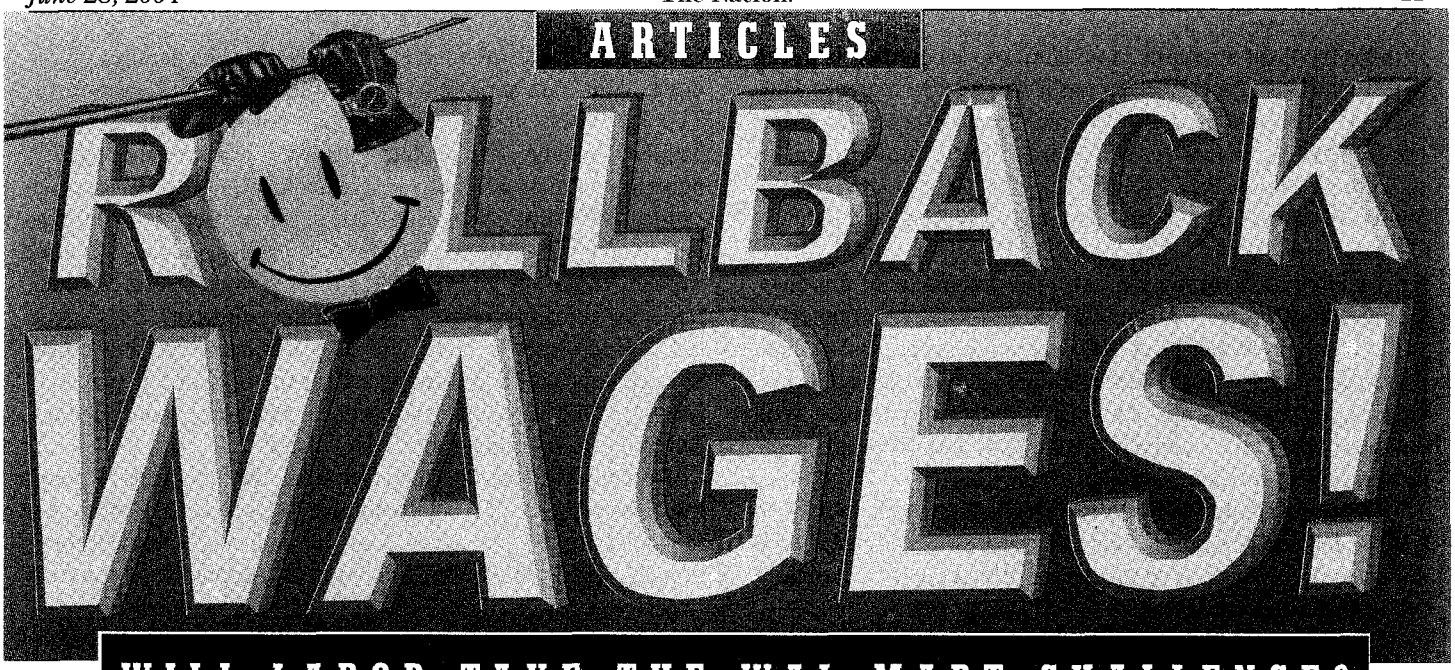
ARTICLES



WILL LABOR TAKE THE WAL-MART CHALLENGE?

Staying union free is a full-time commitment. Unless union prevention is a goal equal to other objectives within an organization, the goal will usually not be attained. The commitment to stay union free must exist at all levels of management—from the Chairperson of the "Board" down to the front-line manager. Therefore, no one in management is immune to carrying his or her "own weight" in the union prevention effort. The entire management staff should fully comprehend and appreciate exactly what is expected of their individual efforts to meet the union free objective.... Unless each member of management is willing to spend the necessary time, effort, energy, and money, it will not be accomplished. The time involved is...365 days per year....

This admonition comes from a handbook Wal-Mart distributes to managers, and gives an idea of the passion and vision behind Wal-Mart's unionbusting project. The $259 billion retail behemoth that has become a defining feature of the American landscape has also profoundly altered labor politics, deploying ever more creative and ruthless tactics to suppress the right to organize, while driving down wages and benefits in the retail industry and beyond.

The company is providing a business model widely imitated by other corporations, especially its competitors. To take one recent example, after striking for months, grocery workers in Southern California were forced to accept a vastly reduced health plan early this year, as supermarkets, anticipating competition from new Wal-Mart Supercenters throughout the state, refused to compromise with the union—probably the first time in history that a potential competitor who had not even entered the market yet was such a key player in a labor dispute. But the California grocers are not alone. Supermarkets all over the country have been lowering wages and decimating workers' health plans. Management claims these cutbacks are necessary to compete with Wal-Mart, but another explanation makes at least as much sense: "Greed," says Linda Gruen, a former Wal-Mart worker now organizing supermarket chains for the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW). "Management sees what Wal-Mart gets away with," she says, and realizes that the way to increase profits is to do the same.

Wal-Mart, which topped the Fortune 500 this year, for the third year in a row, is not just an industry leader: It is an economy leader, the nation's largest private employer by far, with over 1.2 million employees. That number is growing all the time, as Wal-Mart opens new stores just about every week. The average wage is around $8 an hour—and the health plan so expensive and so stingy in its coverage that many workers go without, or depend on the government to pay their medical bills. Says Susan Phillips, vice president of the UFCW and head of its working women's department, for any private-sector union in the United States today, "anytime you go into negotiations...it's like there's this invisible 800-pound gorilla sitting in the room at the bargaining table." This is reflected particularly by employers' ebbing generosity on healthcare, but also on wages, pensions and other benefits. Journalist Bob Ortega observed in his 2000 book, *In Sam We Trust*, that Wal-Mart's "way of thinking," its relentless focus on giving the customer the lowest price, "has become the norm," not just in retail but in all businesses. This can't be done without crushing labor.

That's why a consensus among labor leaders is emerging that organizing Wal-Mart workers is an urgent priority—

by
LIZA FEATHERSTONE

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perhaps the most urgent facing a labor movement that is losing density and influence. Asked what it will take to organize Wal-Mart, Al Zack, outgoing assistant director of strategic programs for the UFCW, points to Wal-Mart's stated commitment to remaining "union free." Says Zack, "When the labor movement...matches that commitment, then it will be successful."

It would be difficult to exaggerate the magnitude of this challenge. Wal-Mart's rhetoric is supported by diligent practice. The company screens out potential union supporters through its hiring process: In addition to excluding those with union histories, the company also administers personality tests to weed out those likely to be sympathetic to unions, and offers managers tips on how to spot such people.

The same handbook, which was given to management in a Wal-Mart distribution center in Greencastle, Indiana, urged managers to be wary of certain union-friendly types, including "the Cause-Oriented Associate," who in high school "led demonstrations against everything from 'red dye' to 'ban the bomb.' He once took a trip to India to visit his personal 'guru.'" Managers are also encouraged to avoid the "Overly-Qualified Associate...a Ph.D operating a grinding machine or a former accountant sweeping the floor.... This type of associate includes the associate who has formerly made substantially more money with other employers."

Despite Wal-Mart's clear focus on fighting unions and the threat posed by its rapid expansion, labor has been slow to respond.

During the hiring process, many workers say they have had to sign forms agreeing that they would not support any effort to unionize the store, a clear violation of federal law. Lorraine Hill, who worked for Wal-Mart in Rock Springs, Wyoming, and in Oxford, Maine, says all her co-workers did this. "If you don't sign that paper you are not employed," she says. "It's not legal. It's not ethical. But if you are low income and you need the job, you abide by the rules."

Of course, these preventive measures do sometimes fail, and workers begin to organize. Wal-Mart is prepared for that, too. At any sign of union activity in a store, managers call the company's Bentonville, Arkansas, headquarters, which sends a "labor relations team" by private plane (Air Walton) to the offending store to crush the organizing effort, often the very day the call comes in.

In the United States, only one group of Wal-Mart employees has successfully organized. In February 2000 ten meatcutters in Jacksonville, Texas, voted 7 to 3 to unionize their tiny bargaining unit. Two weeks later, Wal-Mart abruptly eliminated their jobs by switching to prepackaged meat and assigning the butchers to other departments, effectively abolishing the only union shop on its North American premises. After more than three years, in June 2003, a federal labor judge ruled this move illegal and ordered Wal-Mart to restore the department and recognize the butchers' bargaining unit. Wal-Mart has appealed that decision.

Because the consequences are so minimal, Wal-Mart does not hesitate to break the law in order to stay union-free. Indeed, as the Greencastle handbook to managers notes frankly, during a union drive, "You...are expected to support the company's position.... This may mean walking a tightrope between legitimate campaigning and improper conduct." Wal-Mart has been found guilty of many violations of workers' right to organize, even firing union sympathizers. But paying fines—or in some cases, merely hanging a sign in the break room that states that the company violated workers' rights—is for Wal-Mart simply part of the cost of doing business, a small price to pay for keeping unions out. Until labor laws are reformed to make violating workers' rights a criminal offense—punishable by sending managers and CEOs to prison—running Wal-Mart campaigns based on National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) challenges may be fruitless.

Recently Wal-Mart decided that remaining union-free is a political issue, becoming 2003's number one corporate contributor to candidates, 85 percent of them Republicans. Most corporations, realizing that both Democrats and Republicans respond to business interests, give almost equally to the two parties. But Wal-Mart operates on the premise that while Democrats owe something to labor, Republicans don't—and therefore, if its donations can purchase GOP dominance, they are well spent. Wal-Mart, especially as it moves into urban areas and into union-friendly regions like California, is strategically trying to buy as many politicians and NLRB appointments as it can.

Yet despite Wal-Mart's clear focus on fighting unions, the labor movement has been slow to respond. In the late 1980s the UFCW began to realize that Wal-Mart's rapid growth and competitiveness—and rapid incursion into the grocery industry, which had been mostly unionized—posed an urgent threat to members' jobs. The first Supercenter—a twenty-four-hour Wal-Mart selling groceries in addition to the company's traditional range of goods, from ladies' underwear to lawn mowers—opened in 1988; by the end of 2003, Wal-Mart had opened 1,430 of them. Wal-Mart had historically been concentrated in "right-to-work" states in the South, but as it grew, the company encroached upon more unionized Western and Northeastern regions. Still, the union effort was halfhearted until the late 1990s, when supermarkets began losing market share to Wal-Mart and it became painfully obvious that the company threatened the UFCW's very survival—and its members' hard-won comfortable lives.

As the UFCW's humbling defeat in the California grocery strike showed, the union, after years of friendly relations with so many regional grocery stores, does not know how to conduct an antagonistic national campaign, or how to make use of nationwide publicity and public sympathy for workers. Many labor organizers, pointing to such failings, blame the UFCW for its failure to organize Wal-Mart.

But the mistakes of this particular union may almost be beside the point. While it is true—and sobering—that the UFCW devotes only 2 percent of its national budget to the Wal-Mart campaign, it is also true, as many in the labor movement are beginning to recognize, that there is no way any single union could tackle an opponent of this size and genius. As Mike Leonard, just-retired director of strategic programs for the UFCW, observes,

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Liza Featherstone, a Nation *contributing editor, is the author of* Selling Women Short: The Landmark Battle for Workers' Rights at Wal-Mart, *which will be published by Basic Books in November.*

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if his union spent all its resources on organizing Wal-Mart workers, it would have to neglect the pressing needs of current members. As big as the UFCW is—at 1.4 million members, it is the nation's largest private-sector union—Wal-Mart will soon have more US employees than the UFCW has members. "It's not a fair fight," says Wade Rathke, founder and chief organizer of ACORN and Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 100, in New Orleans. No union has ever organized an entity the size of Wal-Mart, let alone one as creative and coordinated in its anti-unionism. "You have to admire this company," says Rathke. "They are very disciplined, and they've got a program." Labor doesn't, at least not yet.

Increasingly, labor leaders recognize this, and are taking the first step: admitting they have a problem. "This problem [Wal-Mart] is on the short list of any serious labor leader in the country," says Rathke. Andy Stern, president of the SEIU, has opened a dialogue on the subject on his weblog, soliciting ideas about strategy. (The SEIU is not attempting to organize Wal-Mart, nor is any union other than the UFCW, at this point.) Stern, who began the blog conversation with a picture of himself standing in front of one of Wal-Mart's thirty-nine Chinese stores, said in an interview that he sees the blog as an opportunity "to do what Howard Dean did," to stimulate interest, and then as a campaign evolves, mobilize people into action.

As the growing engagement of other unions in this discussion suggests, the UFCW cannot "stop" or change Wal-Mart alone. The task will demand the close cooperation and resources of other labor organizations. Asked what it will take to organize Wal-Mart, Ginny Coughlin of the textile union UNITE, which has recently begun organizing retail workers—but has no immediate plans to take on Wal-Mart—says, "I was just talking about this with a colleague the other day. We figured 3,000 organizers at a minimum. And all the resources, political will and leadership of probably four or five major unions." It is not inconceivable that this could happen: Labor leaders' recent rhetoric about greater cooperation between unions is more than talk. Several large unions are launching joint campaigns to organize low-wage workers. UNITE and HERE (the hotel and restaurant workers' union), for example, which are now in the process of merging, are working with the SEIU to organize employees at Sodexho, the nation's largest dining-services provider—which will involve more serious cooperation between labor organizations than we've seen in years. On May 12 prominent labor leaders held a meeting at SEIU headquarters to discuss the Wal-Mart problem, but partly because most people in the labor movement are preoccupied with defeating Bush, such dialogue is proceeding slowly.

Leonard, who ran the UFCW's Wal-Mart campaign for the past four years, thinks the "entire labor movement" should devote resources to helping Wal-Mart workers build a new, AFL-CIO-affiliated union "from the ground up." If other unions simply run a joint campaign against Wal-Mart, he argues, they are just going to drop out "as soon as they have their next big problem" affecting their own members' immediate interests.

International cooperation could be key to any Wal-Mart organizing strategy. As Andy Stern, just back from China, points out, "Wal-Mart is second only to our current President in unpopularity around the world" [see Carl Goldstein, "Wal-Mart in China," December 8, 2003]. Since Wal-Mart is an increasingly global company, fighting it invites potential for cross-border solidarity, especially in Germany, where many Wal-Mart workers are unionized and the company abides by a sectorwide agreement with a large retail union, and has been the target of pickets and warning strikes. In Britain some ASDA (British Wal-Mart) stores have shop stewards, but none of the workers are recognized as union members, or are covered by a collective-bargaining agreement. In Brazil Wal-Mart has had to reach agreement with unions on some workers' rights issues, while in Japan all of the company's workers are unionized, and Wal-Mart abides by an agreement reached with the stores' previous owner.

Since Wal-Mart is an increasingly global company, fighting it invites potential for cross-border solidarity.

Many in the US labor movement believe that Wal-Mart requires a new organizing strategy. "There is no existing organizing model that unions have effectively employed to date that would organize this company," says Wade Rathke, who believes workers need a way to build their own institutions that is "not based on the permission of the employer."

Joel Rogers, a longtime social-justice activist and University of Wisconsin political scientist, agrees that the traditional model of organizing—by industry, with a focus on getting a majority vote in each shop, which under the law makes all the workers in that shop part of the union—cannot work for Wal-Mart. Rogers advocates an approach he calls "open-source unionism," in which workers could join unions even if the majority of their co-workers had not yet chosen to do so [see Richard B. Freeman and Joel Rogers, "A Proposal to American Labor," June 24, 2002]. Membership would focus on the individual, not the firm or job; a member could still belong to the union if and when she changed jobs. "It would be a kind of 'Wal-Mart Workers Association,'" says Rathke. This feature makes particular sense at a company like Wal-Mart, where turnover is so high. Under this model, employers could not insure that by defeating unions in elections, their workplaces would remain union-free. While these unions would lack collective-bargaining rights, members would receive advice from the union on how to protect their rights during disputes, and help in improving pay and working conditions through collective action. They would also benefit from alliances with community groups and other unions in putting pressure on their employer. Open-source unionism certainly needs re-branding, since only technologically knowledgeable geeks—most of whom are middle class—would understand that phrase, which derives from a term referring to the free exchange of software on the Internet. But it could provide a structure enabling workers' political activism, making it much easier for workers at companies like Wal-Mart to agitate to improve their situation, in cooperation with other workers.

This model isn't just a wonky abstraction. Though they may use different language to describe it, women and immigrants—including sweatshop workers in the United States and Latin America, and New York City taxi drivers—have been at the fore-

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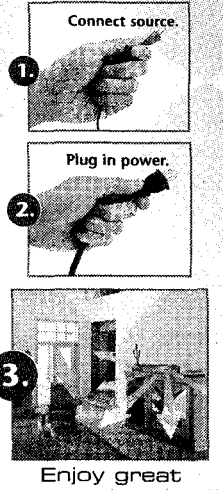

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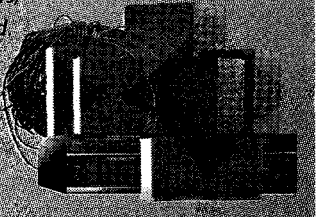

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front of similar new organizational strategies. In her 2001 book *Sweatshop Warriors: Immigrant Women Workers Take On the Global Factory*, Miriam Ching Yoon Louie describes how garment workers have developed worker centers both to agitate for rights on the job and to develop political consciousness and become part of a larger social movement. These are, of course, much smaller-scale than a Wal-Mart Workers Association would be, but the principles—organizing without permission from employer or government, and affiliating with workers who are not in the same shop—are the same.

"It is essential that Wal-Mart workers have something like that," says Jane Collins, a professor of rural sociology and women's studies at the University of Wisconsin who has studied women's labor organizations in Latin American free-trade zones. Most Wal-Mart workers are women, and women—whether in Latin America or in immigrant communities in the United States—have been at the forefront of these new forms of organizing because, says Collins, they have been excluded, or poorly served, by the traditional unions. Similarly, Wal-Mart women find themselves in their current dismal position both as a result of mainstream labor's failure to recognize, early on, the importance of organizing low-wage retail workers and because of working-class women's historic—and ongoing—exclusion from unionized skilled trades.

"This might not work either," admits Rathke, of the Wal-Mart Workers Association idea. But it should be tried, he argues, because "we need a new strategy."

Most people agree that any serious approach to forcing Wal-Mart to the bargaining table must eventually threaten the company's profits. Labor organizers used to think they could do this by asking the public not to shop at Wal-Mart, but now most concede that's impossible, given the retailer's low prices. Their own members shop at Wal-Mart, making at least 30 percent of union credit-card purchases at the retail giant. Even activists thinking seriously about how to oppose the retailer keep finding themselves in its parking lots. "I love that damn store," says Rathke, who recalls being a loyal customer when he lived in Arkansas and needed the discounts. "They had me. I wasn't making 2 cents to put together." Now he lives in New Orleans, and admits, "Damned if I don't go down to Sam's for a new tire! They do have something that works. You can't just convince people they're evil." Indeed, many rural and working-class women view Wal-Mart as an ally, an oasis of low prices in an unfriendly world. In her chart-topping paean to country pride, "Redneck Woman," Gretchen Wilson sums it up irresistibly: "Victoria's Secret, well their stuff's real nice/But I can buy the same damn thing on a Wal-Mart shelf half price/And still look sexy, just as sexy as those models on TV/No, I don't need no designer tag to make my man want me." The question of how to threaten profits, given such intense consumer loyalty, is one of many that the labor movement's current dialogue must engage.

While simply telling people not to shop at Wal-Mart may be a losing battle, fighting Wal-Mart and companies like it will require convincing the public that discounts are no substitute for economic justice. Says Beth Shulman, author of *The Betrayal of Work: How Low-Wage Jobs Fail 30 Million Americans and Their Families*, "We need to talk about cost in a larger way. It is not just about saving $25, but the cost to the lives of workers and their families, and to society." That conversation has already begun in Georgia, Washington State and elsewhere, where studies have shown that Wal-Mart employees depend on public assistance far more than do workers employed by other large companies. April Hotchkiss, who makes $8.33 an hour as a clerk in a Pueblo, Colorado, Supercenter, has had her healthcare costs paid for by the state's program for the indigent. She dreams of the day she will no longer have to shop or work at Wal-Mart. "Whenever I'm able to quit this place, and find something better, I'm never going to set foot in another [Wal-Mart] again," she says. "I don't care how low the prices are—of course the prices are low, because they don't pay anybody worth crap!"

Ultimately, the entire progressive movement—not just labor—will have to make the unionization of Wal-Mart a priority.

Ultimately, for this campaign to succeed, the entire progressive movement—not just labor—will have to make the unionization of Wal-Mart a priority. Pointing to the recent victory in Inglewood (a Los Angeles suburb where voters rejected a move by Wal-Mart to exempt itself from local zoning rules and erect a massive Supercenter) and the momentum of similar battles in Chicago and elsewhere, Rathke says that when it comes to fighting Wal-Mart, "there is more traction in the community than on the labor side." Andy Stern agrees, envisioning his blog conversation as the beginning of a movement-wide campaign by progressives to bring pressure on Wal-Mart. "The campaign needs to begin not as a labor campaign," says Stern, pointing out that community organizations "are more used to sustaining people around issues for long periods." Similarly, while Stern thinks there is "clearly an opportunity to create a Wal-Mart Workers Association," given that so many employees are unhappy with their working conditions, he thinks it might be a job for ACORN and other community organizations, since "it is not a traditional union model."

But Stern believes the labor movement should put resources behind a central organization that could serve as a resource for—and help coordinate—the many constituencies (workers, environmentalists, feminists, anti-sprawl advocates, churches, small-business owners) opposing Wal-Mart. At present, these groups work largely in isolation. Says Rathke, "There's no place to call and ask, 'How do you bring the ghostbusters in?'"

Labor activists talk a lot about involving the "community," which all agree is an important component in the struggle to unionize Wal-Mart. Yet one advantage Wal-Mart has in this regard is that with 70 percent of its stores located outside of metropolitan areas, and "Main Street" dying everywhere, it's doing business in many places where there isn't much of a community. In urban areas like Inglewood, and in some small towns, black churches, small-business associations and other institutions have been able to facilitate a discussion about whether Wal-Mart serves or thwarts the common good. But in many of the rural and exurban counties and townships where the retailer has traditionally operated, there has been no basis for such a debate: only isolated fami-

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lies struggling to get by, grateful to be able to load up their cars with cheap groceries from Wal-Mart. As is often the case, rhetoric about "community" can blind us to the crucial problem of its absence. On the other hand, wherever there is a thriving civic culture, that culture is an essential ally in the fight against Wal-Mart. In Vermont, for example, controversy over proposed superstores recently inspired the National Trust for Historic Preservation to declare the entire state "endangered" by the retailer.

It's encouraging that labor leaders are talking about this problem and entertaining so many new approaches. Yet as Mike Leonard cautions, in the labor movement, "it's a pretty rare day when we go beyond talking about a new idea, and that's part of the problem." And many workers are not optimistic now. Linda Gruen, who tried for several years to organize her Wal-Mart co-workers, is "not sure we will ever unionize Wal-Mart." April Hotchkiss, who still works at Wal-Mart and is trying to organize her co-workers, shares Gruen's view at times. "It is like parting the Red Sea," she says. "Sometimes I think it ain't going to happen. It is one of the hardest things I've ever tried to accomplish. I'd probably be better off trying to run the New York City Marathon." ■

A WAVE OF MINORITY POLITICS IS CRESTING IN CALIFORNIA—WHITE MINORITY POLITICS.

Fear of a Brown Planet

ROBERTO LOVATO

The enemy preaches "race hatred," according to *FrontPageMagazine*'s David Horowitz. It aims to undermine the very foundations of Anglo-American civilization—and perhaps, through sheer numbers and singleness of purpose, it will succeed. Horowitz was the featured speaker at a March rally held on the UCLA campus, where attendees denounced the "brainwashing," "evil propaganda" and "institutional racism" of their adversaries in a looming cultural war.

LISA BLACKSHEAR

These white Republicans are at the forefront of a new wave of minority politics: white minority politics. Though rooted in California, this new politics of fear is cropping up across the country as its promoters redefine who is racial victim and who is racial oppressor, neatly inverting—and co-opting—the arguments and terms of the civil rights movement. The occasion for the UCLA rally was the campaign against what a recent article called "one of the most prominent and powerful organizations in the United States": the Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán, known as Mecha, a national Chicano student group founded during the identity and power movements of the early 1970s.

Former California Democratic gubernatorial candidate Cruz Bustamante was the most high-profile Latino politician to come under attack for association with Mecha last year, though City Councilman and former LA mayoral hopeful Antonio Villaraigosa and dozens of other Latino politicos have also been targeted. At issue are references in Mecha's founding documents to "La Raza," a concept popularized by the early twentieth-century Mexican intellectual José Vasconcelos, which translates literally as "the race" but refers figuratively to Latinos born of the Spanish conquest of Indians. Casting this vocabulary of racial solidarity as a pernicious ideology of racial supremacy, UCLA's Republicans have raised a war chest of more than $28,000 to accomplish what Stanford University's Republicans have already done: cut off Mecha's funding. Meanwhile, university Mechas in other states, including Colorado, Texas (offices of UT El Paso Mecha were vandalized late last year) and New Mexico are facing similar challenges.

Alamo-like fears of a Latino takeover are emerging in jittery white enclaves across this national-security-driven country, in which one of every four Americans will be of Latino descent by 2050, according to a census report released this past March. Tom Tancredo, a Colorado Representative and chairman of the Congressional Immigration Reform Caucus, has since 9/11 regularly conflated Latino immigrants with "terrorist criminals" at meetings like one recently held in the predominantly white Los Angeles suburb of La Canada. At that event, organizers displayed an unmanned aerial vehicle that they hope will track Latino immigrants at the border the way it tracks enemy combatants in Iraq. Tancredo also rails against Latinos who threaten "our civilization" with textbooks that describe "defenders of the Alamo as slave owners, land speculators, and Indian killers."

The Sierra Club recently fended off a hostile takeover by a new breed of well-heeled, anti-immigrant, anti-Latino activists who believe they're defending American civilization against the balkanizing and breeding barbarians from the South. Mediagenic scholars like commentator and bestselling *Mexifornia* author Victor Davis Hanson provide intellectual cover for this hate-based movement with frequent appearances on television, radio and lecture circuits and on the Internet. (Hanson's work is supported by the Claremont and Hoover institutes, both of which receive significant funding from the Olin Foundation, which has also supported notorious *Bell Curve* author Charles Murray and the war think tank Project for the New American Century, or PNAC.) Cable TV ranters Bill O'Reilly, Lou Dobbs and Sean Hannity have added their voices to the chorus warning against the Latino menace. Most recently, national security guru Samuel Huntington

Roberto Lovato (robvato63@yahoo.com) is a Los Angeles–based writer with Pacific News Service. *This article was written under the auspices of the 2003 George Washington Williams Fellowship of the Independent Press Association.*

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called US Latinos "the single most immediate and most serious challenge to America's traditional identity" in his new book, *Who Are We? The Challenges to America's National Identity*. What Huntington calls "The Hispanic Challenge" is portrayed as the cause of a "clash of civilizations" in the homeland.

Orange County is the epicenter of one of the most dramatic demographic and political shifts of the developed world. These changes are spinning identities and political processes with the speed and relentlessness of Disneyland's whirling Mad Hatter teacup ride, which made me dizzy in the late 1960s, when I was a minority (80 percent of the population identified itself as "white") among the mostly white workers and white Mouseketeers near the Davy Crockett canoes in Frontierland and the boats cruising the exotic tropical jungles in Adventureland.

Since then, as many as 2 million mostly white Californians have fled to what may have appeared to be less exotic places, like Florida, Alaska and Texas. During the 1990s California gained more than 4 million residents, mostly newborns and immigrant Latinos. As a result, whites, who are still more than 70 percent of California's electorate, are just 47 percent of the population and will be outnumbered by Latinos within twenty years. Rich and poor white voters holding down the racial ramparts in the state are being ideologically re-equipped as foot soldiers in the next phase of the conservative suburban political revolution that gave California—and eventually the country—its first actor-politico, the late Ronald Reagan, who stoked the embers of white voter fear while pounding the drum of national security. Unlike the more naked racial signposts and rituals of the Reagan era (signs in parks that said NO DOGS, NO NEGROES, NO MEXICANS; snarling dogs that kept nonwhite students at bay), today's signs are more coded (NO FUTBOL, NO STREET VENDING, etc.). But the more subtle messages are more widely and effectively distributed by think tanks, academics, radio pundits and right-wing politicians, who have created an industry that interprets whiteness in an unprecedented context—in which many whites feel uncomfortably surrounded by "minorities." In this spirit, for example, Arnold Schwarzenegger made hay out of driver's license–wielding immigrants and Indian gaming authorities in the recall election last year.

Ads and press events and 'reports' link Latino immigrants to practically every problem, from disease and pollution to terrorism.

Radio listeners in Ventura County wake up to ads with messages like "Congratulations Ventura County. You're known for some of California's most contaminated beaches." The narrator then explains, "Ventura isn't coping with the waste products from its ongoing population explosion and associated development." Such ads as well as press events and "reports" linking Latino immigrants to practically every problem in the Golden State—from disease and crime to national security and terrorism—are sponsored and distributed statewide by Californians for Population Stabilization, an organization whose board of directors is made up not of old-school white supremacists but of people like UCLA physics and astronomy professor and insurgent Sierra Club board member Dr. Ben Zuckerman, and Stuart Hurlbert, a 2003 National Academy of Sciences award recipient and fellow of the prestigious American Association for the Advancement of Science. Links between grassroots and elite white fear networks include board memberships, financing, joint publications and, frequently, backing from Michigan ophthalmologist and multimillionaire John Tanton. Tanton, according to a report by the Southern Poverty Law Center, has "formed, led, or in other ways made possible" most major anti-Latino, anti-immigrant groups in the United States.

Among the organizations founded by Tanton are the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR) and US English, on whose advisory board Schwarzenegger has served as an active member since 1988. Despite calls from national Latino leaders that he resign—as even David Horowitz did following revelations that US English staff members were affiliated with the white supremacist Council of Conservative Citizens—the self-proclaimed "poster child for immigrants" has yet to do so.

California's Republicans have kept generation after generation of Democrats and progressives on the defensive with initiatives that exploit growing anxieties among the aging, angry white voting majority. Since the deindustrialization of the 1970s, the ability to manipulate information and technology has increasingly defined rich and poor in the biotech labs of Irvine, the silicon farms of Santa Clara, the global agribusiness centers of the San Joaquin Valley and elsewhere. Racial identity and education thus came to occupy the center of Information Age politics, spawning a series of ballot initiatives. Proposition 187 denied public education to the children of the undocumented, Proposition 209 denied Latinos and others access to education through affirmative action and Proposition 227 did away with bilingual education programs. The forces of white fear were even bold enough to use the local initiative process to attempt to split Los Angeles into two separate cities in 2002. And, had it won, last year's Proposition 54 would have created a society blind to the color of suffering by eviscerating race from government statistics (many believe it lost only because of a shortage of funds). Unlike the blurred vision of the Democratic Party, the Republican vision of California—and America, as several of these initiatives have been exported to other states—is clear: separate cities of poor, uneducated, brown barbarians and shining, walled white cities like those in the Academy Award–winning, all-white fantasy *Lord of the Rings*.

The Schwarzenegger message played especially well with older white voters. An especially angry member of that aging vanguard is Lou Calabro, head of the European American Issues Forum (EAIF), which he co-founded following a pro–Proposition 209 rally in 1996. After telling me that the magazines I write for, including *The Nation*, are "egg-sucking, left-wing liberal extremists with an agenda of their own," the energetic, stalky, blue-eyed, 70-year-old former police lieutenant arranged to meet me at his favorite grill around the corner from the San Francisco police station where EAIF, which he says has 300 members, holds its meetings. Chinese residents are becoming the majority population in the neighborhood where we chatted over steak and potatoes.

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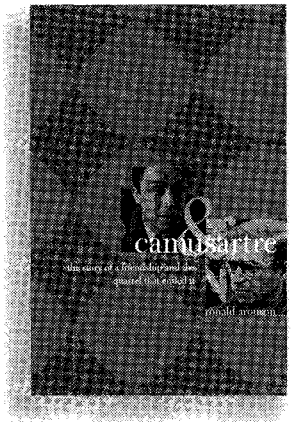

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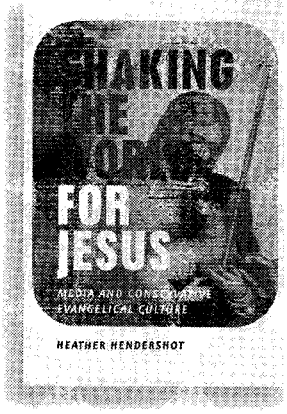

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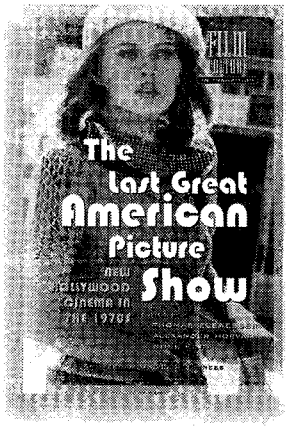

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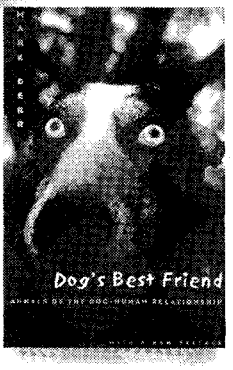

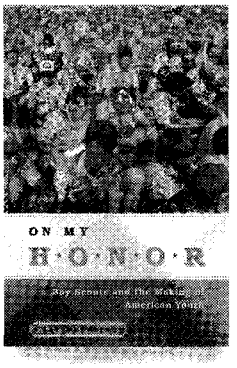

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Calabro tells me that EAIF's primary mission is to "minimize discrimination and defamation against whites." To pursue this mission, EAIF works to raise awareness of hate crimes against whites ("Did you know that 90 percent of interracial hate crimes between blacks and whites are perpetrated by blacks—against whites?") and to address discrimination against whites before city councils, health bureaucracies and, especially, schools.

Calabro and EAIF are hard to situate politically; they have not been labeled "hate groups" by organizations like the Southern Poverty Law Center. They *have* met with mayors, state legislators, city council members and other establishment figures in Northern California, and they draw on the reports and messages generated by think tank fellows like Hanson. Calabro is quick to distance his organization from white fringe groups, which, he says, promote hatred as much as black, Latino and Jewish groups do.

The EAIF was involved in the controversial case of 15-year-old Lisa McClelland, who petitioned authorities at Freedom High School to form a Caucasian Club in predominantly (64 percent) white Oakley in Contra Costa County, just an hour's drive from liberal San Francisco. School authorities expressed grave concerns about her petition, but never denied the request to form the club. Still, McClelland and Calabro, her "informal adviser," have filed a complaint with the US Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights for denying Lisa liberty at Freedom High. Since then, several other California schools have started white student organizations, including the Caucasian Student Union at Piedmont High School and "European Ancestry" club at San Jose's Independence High.

The recruiting environment for racist groups gets a boost from the work of mediagenic intellectuals like Samuel Huntington.

Calabro shared with me an EAIF kit, which contained instructions on "Forming Campus Chapters" at high schools and colleges ("Example: In a speech class, speak about EAIF recognition and note any positive reaction"); a copy of California Assembly Resolution 91, designating October "European American Heritage Month" in California; and a *Wall Street Journal* op-ed by classics and history professor—and PNAC supporter—Donald Kagan. With a background picture of a breastplated Augustus Caesar pointing to the future of Pax Romana and, implicitly, its modern imitators, Kagan's article, "Why History Matters," contrasts the virtues of freedom and classics against the vices of civilizational decline.

The recruiting environment for groups like the EAIF and others struggling to establish a new Pax California is getting a huge boost from the media blitz surrounding anti-immigrant, anti-Latino books by heavyweights like Huntington and Hanson. Hanson, who attended the 2002 Christmas parties of both George W. Bush and Dick Cheney and has briefed their staffs on military history, links ethnic groups who (he says) refuse to assimilate with threats to national security: "Today we are at war with those who want to kill us all, whatever the group we claim to belong to. The scab of carelessness and inattention has been torn away, showing that the wound of separatism and ethnic conflict needs immediate care, lest it fester into disunity and thus weaken us when the stakes are so high."

After an academic career almost entirely focused on war and empire (his books include *Carnage and Culture* and *The Soul of Battle*) Hanson is now called upon as the de facto expert on all matters Latino by C-SPAN, CNN and many other outlets. Directing his imperial gaze at California's ascendant Latino majority in *Mexifornia*, Hanson exploits post-9/11 hysteria: "After September 11, 2001, the question of secure borders and a unified citizenry no longer stands afar in the future or remains a parlor game of academics and intellectuals, but is a matter of everyone's concern right now, both in and out of California."

Chock-full of Spenglerian talk of "decline," "balkanized enclaves," "the fiction of cultural equality" and other "pathologies" brought by Mexicans and other Latinos to the "West," *Mexifornia* proposes an "assimilationist program," echoing calls by Progressive Era California Governor Hiram Johnson for a program promoting "Americanization" of immigrants via education, language training and other remedies.

Hanson and other conservatives neglect to mention that the area surrounding Hanson's San Joaquin Valley home boasts a startling disparity between rich and poor, and that the stretch of farmland between Bakersfield and Stockton was the site of more reported hate crimes in 2002 than Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana combined, according to FBI statistics.

Instead of participating in serious dialogue about the roots of racial tension, the forces of white fear work relentlessly to portray now vulnerable postindustrial whites as victims of a shadowy Latino, and especially Mexican, empire. Not far from the shimmering beaches of Orange County, white residents attending an Anaheim City Council meeting recently protested the opening of a Mexico City–based Gigante supermarket chain outlet. They screamed "cultural imperialism." Echoing the war cries of Hanson and Huntington, another speaker at the council meeting warned that California was becoming "ground zero for America's second civil war."

Whether or not there's a war, there *is* radical change afoot in the land of the identity-spinning Mad Hatter ride that now makes whites dizzy. Many in Orange County were shocked to see Republican immigration-war veteran and now Anaheim Mayor Curt Pringle standing next to an aproned "Mrs. Anaheim" and Justo Frias, head of Gigante's US operations, at the recent grand opening of the supermarket. The website of the anti-Latino hate group American Patrol declared, "New Anaheim Mayor Chummy With Reconquistas (Reconquerors)." They were incensed that Pringle, who fourteen years ago paid security guards to hold placards saying NON-CITIZENS CAN'T VOTE in front of polling places in heavily Latino districts in Orange County, was now shopping with the enemy.

Pringle's conversion represents part of another, counterbalancing trend in California that is also taking root alongside the politics of white fear. Sometimes, as in the case of the Gigante store, there is a crass capitalist logic driving the acceptance of Latinos and their culture. At the same time, more-rational whites, and nonwhites, are waging a political struggle to control and attack frontally the crazed but highly organized

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elements of white fear in schools, neighborhoods and voting booths.

The politics of white minority status, however, have been the blind spot in liberal Democratic California, where mostly white political consultants have yet to figure out how to reconcile Latino ascendancy with white (and, increasingly, elderly black) fear to create the grand coalition that will eventually replace the black-white coalitions that elected liberal Governors Pat and Jerry Brown as well as Mayor Tom Bradley of Los Angeles. If mainstream Democrats want to build the electoral coalitions that will deter the Republican onslaught, they will have to bring Latinos out of the clerk's office and into more substantive positions at multimillion-dollar liberal political consulting firms.

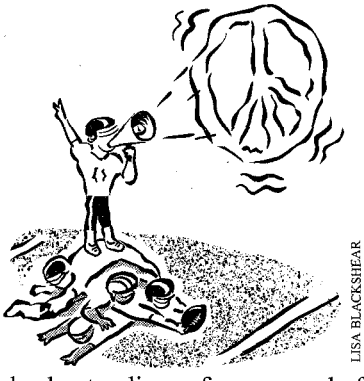
And yet even if they rise to this electoral challenge, the rest of us will still be swimming against a strong cultural tide. That blockbuster civilizational war epics like *Troy* and Oliver Stone's *Alexander the Great* are hitting the box office in a time of political, military and cultural war is not mere coincidence. Movies and political narratives about civilizational clashes sell (except in the case of the the recent—and already forgotten—*Alamo*), and they will continue to find financing and audiences in the absence of an effective response to the promoters of white fear in California and beyond. Perhaps it is time to consider renting a copy of one of the more than thirteen Alamo movies and "Remember": How fear of the nonwhite other gets deployed domestically in times of global war and conquest. ■

CULTURAL CHANGES AND LUCRATIVE ENDORSEMENTS MAY EXPLAIN A DROP IN ACTIVISM.

Where Are the Jocks for Justice?

KELLY CANDAELE AND PETER DREIER

Adonal Foyle, 29, is a 6-foot, 10-inch center for the NBA's Golden State Warriors. Like most pro athletes, he spent his youth perfecting his game, hoping for a shot at big-time sports. But off the court he's an outspoken critic of America's political system. "This mother of all democracies," Foyle insists, "is one of the most corrupt systems, where a small minority make the decisions for everybody else."



LISA BLACKSHEAR

Three years ago Foyle started a grassroots group called Democracy Matters (www.democracymatters.org). Its goal is to educate young people about politics, mobilize them to vote and bring pressure on elected officials to reform the nation's campaign finance laws. When he's not playing basketball, Foyle is frequently speaking at high schools, colleges and conferences about the corrupting role of big money in politics. "I have lots of support [from fellow players] and I explain to them a lot what I'm doing," says Foyle. "The players understand that I want people to be excited about the political system."

Foyle's activism is rare in the world of professional sports. Many athletes visit kids in hospitals, start foundations that fix inner-city playgrounds, create scholarship funds to help poor students attend college and make commercials urging kids to stay in school and say no to drugs. But when it comes to political dissent, few speak out on big issues like war, sweatshop labor, environmental concerns or the increasing gap between rich and poor. While Hollywood celebrities frequently lend their fame and fortune to candidates and causes, athletes are expected to perform, not pontificate. On the few occasions when they do express themselves, they are often met with derision and contempt.

Last year, for example, just before the United States invaded Iraq, Dallas Mavericks guard Steve Nash wore a T-shirt to media day during the NBA's All-Star weekend that said NO WAR. SHOOT FOR PEACE. Numerous sports columnists criticized Nash for speaking his mind. (One wrote that he should "just shut up and play.") David Robinson, an Annapolis graduate and former naval officer, and then center for the San Antonio Spurs, said that Nash's attire was inappropriate. Flip Saunders, coach of the NBA's Minnesota Timberwolves, told the Minneapolis *Star-Tribune*: "What opinions you have, it's important to keep them to yourselves." Since then, no other major pro athlete has publicly expressed antiwar sentiments.

Although political activism has never been widespread among pro athletes, Foyle is following in the footsteps of some courageous jocks. After breaking baseball's color line in 1947, Jackie Robinson was outspoken against racial segregation during and after his playing career, despite being considered too angry and vocal by many sportswriters, owners and fellow players. During the 1960s and '70s some prominent athletes used their celebrity status to speak out on key issues, particularly civil rights and Vietnam. The most well-known example, boxing champion Muhammad Ali, publicly opposed the war and refused induction into the Army in 1967, for which he was stripped of his heavyweight title and sentenced to five years in prison (he eventually won an appeal in the Supreme Court and didn't serve any time). Today he is among the world's most admired people, but at the time sportswriters and politicians relentlessly attacked him.

Many others were also unafraid to wear their values on their uniforms—and sometimes paid the price. Coaches and team executives told Dave Meggyesy, an All-Pro linebacker for the

Kelly Candaele is a Los Angeles writer whose mother played for the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League in the 1940s and whose brother Casey played ten years in the major leagues. Peter Dreier, the E.P. Clapp Distinguished Professor of Politics and director of the Urban & Environmental Policy Program at Occidental College, is co-author of The Next LA: The Struggle for a Livable City *(forthcoming).*

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St. Louis Cardinals in the late 1960s, that his antiwar views were detrimental to his team and his career. As he recounts in his memoir *Out of Their League*, Meggyesy refused to back down, was consequently benched, and retired at age 28 while still in his athletic prime. Tennis great Arthur Ashe campaigned against apartheid well before the movement gained widespread support. Bill Russell led his teammates on boycotts of segregated facilities while starring for the Boston Celtics. Olympic track medalists John Carlos and Tommie Smith created an international furor with their Black Power salute at the 1968 Olympics in Mexico City, which hurt their subsequent professional careers. When St. Louis Cardinals catcher Ted Simmons came to the majors from the University of Michigan in 1967, some teammates were taken aback by his shaggy hair and the peace symbols on his bat, but they couldn't argue with his All-Star play. In 1972, almost a year before the Supreme Court's landmark *Roe v. Wade* ruling, tennis star Billie Jean King was one of fifty-three women to sign an ad in the first issue of *Ms.* magazine boldly proclaiming, "We Have Had Abortions." Washington Redskins lineman Ray Schoenke organized 400 athletes to support George McGovern's 1972 antiwar presidential campaign despite the fact that his coach, George Allen, was a close friend of McGovern's opponent, Richard Nixon.

'Ali was willing to go to jail and relinquish his boxing title for what he believed in.... It's a scared generation today.' —Jim Bouton

Contemporary activism hasn't infiltrated the locker rooms as it did in the past, in large measure because of dramatic improvements in athletes' economic situation. A half-century ago, big-time sports—boxing and baseball in particular—was a melting pot of urban working-class ethnics and rural farm boys. Back then, many professional athletes earned little more than ordinary workers. Many lived in the same neighborhoods as their fans and had to work in the off-season to supplement their salaries.

Today's athletes are a more diverse group. A growing number come from suburban upbringings and attended college. At the same time, the number of pro athletes from impoverished inner-city backgrounds in the United States and Latin America has increased. Regardless of their backgrounds, however, all pro athletes have much greater earning power than their predecessors. Since the 1970s, television contracts have brought new revenues that have dramatically increased salaries. The growing influence of players' unions—particularly in baseball, since the end of the reserve clause in 1976—has also raised the salaries of stars and journeyman jocks alike. For example, the minimum salary among major league baseball players increased from $16,000 in 1975 to $100,000 in 1990 to $300,000 last year, while the average salary during those years grew from $44,676 to $578,930 to $2.3 million. Even ordinary players are now able to supplement their incomes with commercial endorsements. At the upper echelons of every sport, revenue from product endorsements far exceeds the salaries paid by the teams superstars play for or the prize money for the tournaments they win.

Thanks to their unions, pro athletes now have more protection than ever before to speak out without jeopardizing their careers. But, at the same time, they have much more at stake economically. "Athletes now have too much to lose in endorsement potential," explains Marc Pollick, founder and president of the Giving Back Fund, which works with pro athletes to set up charitable foundations. "That has neutralized their views on controversial issues. Companies don't want to be associated with controversy."

A few years ago labor activists tried and failed to enlist basketball superstar Michael Jordan in their crusade to improve conditions in Nike's factories. But with a multimillion-dollar Nike contract, he was unwilling to speak out against sweatshop conditions in overseas plants. In 1990 Jordan had refused to endorse his fellow black North Carolinian Harvey Gantt, then running for the US Senate against right-winger Jesse Helms, on the grounds, Jordan explained at the time, that "Republicans buy sneakers, too." (The criticism must have stung. Six years later he contributed $2,000 to Gantt's second unsuccessful effort to unseat Helms. And in 2000, like many NBA players, he publicly supported former New York Knicks star Bill Bradley's campaign for President. In March he contributed $10,000 to Illinois State Senator Barack Obama, who recently won the Democratic Party's nomination for an open US Senate seat.)

Early in his professional career, golfer Tiger Woods stirred some political controversy with one of his first commercials for Nike after signing a $40 million endorsement contract. It displayed images of Woods golfing as these words scrolled down the screen: "There are still courses in the United States I am not allowed to play because of the color of my skin. I've heard I'm not ready for you. Are you ready for me?" At the time Woods told *Sports Illustrated* that it was "important...for this country to talk about this subject [racism].... You can't say something like that in a polite way. Golf has shied away from this for too long. Some clubs have brought in tokens, but nothing has really changed. I hope what I'm doing can change that."

According to Richard Lapchick, executive director of the National Consortium for Academics and Sports at the University of Central Florida, and a longtime activist against racism in sports, Woods was "crucified" by some sportswriters for the commercial and his comments. Nike quickly realized that confrontational politics wasn't the best way to sell shoes. "Tiger seemed to learn a lesson," Lapchick says. "It is one that I wish he and other athletes had not learned: no more political issues. He has been silent since then because of what happened early in his career." Woods remained on the sidelines during the 2002 controversy over the intransigence of the Augusta National Golf Club, host of the annual Masters tournament, on permitting women to join.

Like Lapchick, former New York Yankees pitching ace Jim Bouton, whose 1970 tell-all book *Ball Four* scandalized the baseball establishment, bemoans the cautiousness of today's highly paid athletes. "I'm always disappointed when I see a guy like Michael Jordan, who is set up for life, not speaking out on controversial issues," said Bouton. Today's athletes, he observed, "seem to have an entourage around them that they have to consult before making a statement or getting involved in something. Ali was willing to go to jail and relinquish his boxing title for what he

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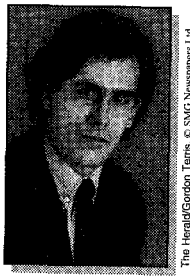

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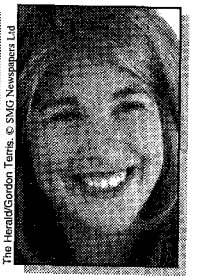

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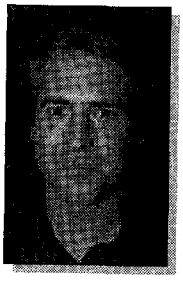

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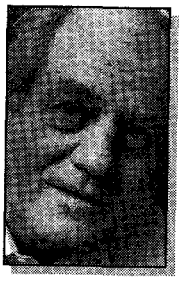

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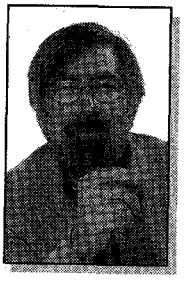

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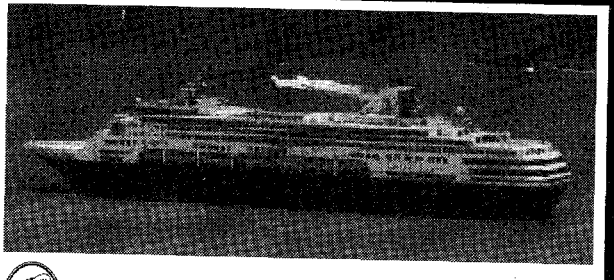

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believed in. He was a hero. It's a scared generation today." And it may be no coincidence that some of today's more outspoken athletes grew up outside the United States. Foyle, now a US citizen, is from the Grenadines, and the Mavericks' Nash is a Canadian.

American sports—from the Olympics to pro boxing to baseball—have long been linked, by politicians, business leaders and sports entrepreneurs, to conservative versions of nationalism and patriotism. At all professional sports events, fans and players are expected to stand while the national anthem is played before the game can begin. No similar expressions of patriotism are required, for example, at symphony concerts or Broadway shows.

Over the past century Presidents have routinely invited championship teams to the White House for photo ops. A few weeks after 9/11 President Bush attended a World Series game at Yankee Stadium. His press secretary explained that Bush (who once owned the Texas Rangers) was there "because of baseball's important role in our culture." In January, just before the Super Bowl, Bush invited New England Patriots quarterback Tom Brady to sit in the gallery during his State of the Union address. Of the more than 900 Americans who have died in Afghanistan and Iraq, none were singled out for as much attention—by the media or politicians—as Arizona Cardinals safety Pat Tillman, who was killed in Afghanistan in April. Sometimes politicians' efforts to align themselves with sports figures can backfire. In 1991, for example, when President George H.W. Bush invited the Chicago Bulls to the White House to celebrate their NBA championship, Bulls guard Craig Hodges handed Bush a letter expressing outrage about the condition of urban America.

While most pro athletes are silent on political issues, many team owners regard political involvement as essential to doing business. Owners like Jerry Colangelo of the Phoenix Suns and Arizona Diamondbacks, Art Modell of the Baltimore Ravens, Charles Monfort of the Colorado Rockies and George Steinbrenner of the New York Yankees make large campaign contributions to both Republicans and Democrats; invite elected officials to sit next to them at games; and lobby city, state and federal officeholders on legislation and tax breaks for new stadiums.

The emergence of professional players' unions should have been a voice for athletes on political and social issues. According to Ed Garvey, who ran the NFL Players Association from 1971 until 1983, racial turmoil was critical to the union's early development. The union "was driven by the African-American players, who knew there was an unwritten quota on most teams where there would not be more than a third blacks on any one team," says Garvey, who now practices law in Wisconsin. "And they knew they wouldn't have a job with the team when their playing days were over." The players also understood that team owners were "the most powerful monopoly in the country," he says.

Garvey brought the association into the AFL-CIO—the only professional sports union to do so—to give the players a sense that they were part of the broader labor movement. In the early 1970s several NFL players walked the picket lines with striking Farah clothing workers, joined bank employees in Seattle to boost their organizing drive and took other public stands. But "now they're making enough money, so they want to keep their heads down," he says. When Marvin Miller, a former Steelworkers Union staffer, became the first executive director of the Major League Baseball Players Association (MLBPA) in 1966, he sought to raise players' political awareness. "We didn't just explain the labor laws," he recalls. "We had to get players to understand that they were a union. We did a lot of internal education to talk to players about broader issues."

But those days are long gone. Bouton believes that athletes' unions now consider themselves partners in the sports business. They are "part of the same club," Bouton says, negotiating mainly to give players a greater share of proceeds from ticket sales, television contracts and the marketing of player names and team logos. Donald Fehr, the MLBPA's executive director, argues that players' unions should stick to the issues that directly affect them. "It is not our role to go around taking positions on things for the sake of taking positions," he insists. "Only if it's a matter involving baseball or the players do we look at an issue and determine what to do."

'It is not our role to go around taking positions on things for the sake of taking positions.'
—Donald Fehr, head of the MLBPA

Like its counterparts in other sports, the MLBPA occasionally goes beyond the narrow confines of business unionism. For example, Fehr sent letters asking ballplayers to honor the recent United Food and Commercial Workers picket lines in Southern California and gave verbal support to the striking workers of the New Era Cap Company, who make major league baseball's caps in a Derby, New York, facility.

The players associations could usefully go beyond such symbolic gestures. After the 234-day 1994–95 strike ended, catcher Mike Piazza, then with the Los Angeles Dodgers, donated $100 for every home run he hit to the union that represented the concessionaires, who lost considerable pay while 921 games were canceled. It was an individual gesture of empathy with Dodger Stadium's working class—ushers, ticket takers, parking-lot attendants and food vendors—that generated tremendous good will among the Dodgers' fan base. As an organization, the MLBPA could have followed Piazza's example and set aside a small part of its large strike fund to help stadium employees who were temporarily out of work.

A glaring example of the MLBPA's shortsightedness is its reaction to a recent exposé by the National Labor Committee (NLC, www.nlcnet.org/campaigns), reported in the *New York Times*, revealing that Costa Rican workers who stitch Rawlings baseballs for the major leagues are paid 30 cents for each ball, which is then sold for $15 in US sporting-goods stores. According to a local doctor who worked at the Rawlings plant in the 1990s, a third of the workers developed carpal-tunnel syndrome, an often-debilitating pain and numbness of the hands and wrists. When the *Times* asked Fehr about the situation, he said he didn't know about it, despite the fact that the Rawlings plant had been the subject of news stories for several years. (Another recent NLC report documented that NBA sweatshirts are made in Burmese sweatshops.)

Echoing growing concern about corporate responsibility and

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runaway jobs, professional players associations could demand that teams purchase their uniforms, bats, helmets and balls solely from companies—in the United States and abroad—that provide workers with decent wages, working conditions and benefits. The associations could send fact-finding delegations of athletes to inspect the working conditions at factories where their uniforms and equipment are made. The associations could demand that teams provide a living wage for all stadium employees, encourage politically conscious athletes to express their views and endorse candidates for office, support organizations like Adonal Foyle's Democracy Matters and even walk picket lines and do commercials for labor causes. As Foyle understands, taking stands on such issues could help the players forge better relations with the community whose support is critical to their continued economic success.

Foyle has refused to be intimidated by those sportswriters and fans who object to his beliefs. "How can we say we are creating a society in Iraq based on democracy and freedom and tell people here who have the audacity to speak out to keep quiet?" he says. "If people shut down because they are afraid the media is going to spank them or fans are going to boo them, then the terrorists have won." A history major at Colgate University, Foyle says, "The 1960s generation was against the war, people coming home in body bags, dogs gnawing at black people's feet. Today issues are more complicated, and you have to read between the lines. When you talk about campaign finance reform, you are talking about all of the issues—war, civil rights, environment, gender, globalization—because they are all connected." He adds: "If people want us to be role models, it's not just saying what people want you to say. It's pushing the boundaries a bit, saying things that you may not want to think about. That's good for a society. Morality is much bigger than athletics." ■

Letter From Cambodia

by Noy Thrupkaew

The hotel receptionists were hunched over a small, battered radio that was squawking in rapid-fire Khmer. "Another shooting. A singer this time," S. said, his face smudged with worry. "Maybe you can write about it?"

Each time they handed me my room key, the young staff at the hotel dispensed expert synopses of the day's events—which sadly and reliably seemed to feature government corruption, electoral mischief, suspected political assassinations or all three. Even though I've left Cambodia, my friends have kept up with the bulletins. One appeared in my e-mail inbox earlier this year, bearing the subject title The Sad News.

"Dear Ms. Noy," wrote 20-year-old P. "Now, in Phnom Penh has many problems. Mr. Chea Vichea was shot dead Thursday in front a newspaper stall about 500m in the east of [our] hotel. He is a union leader and...also an opposition party supporter."

It was no way to celebrate an anniversary. A quarter-century ago the Vietnamese Army rolled into Cambodia and ended the rule of the Khmer Rouge—the movement that had tried to transform Cambodia into a utopian agrarian collective, and turned it instead into a hell salted with landmines and the bones of the approximately 1.7 million who died in the regime's nearly four-year rule. The mass graves and the explosives are just a few of the remnants of a past that has left Cambodia one of the poorest countries in the region, even after a massive UN nation-building effort in the 1990s. The other reminders are former Khmer Rouge leaders, the vast majority of whom live freely in Cambodia.

But with the twenty-fifth anniversary comes heightened pressure to bring those leaders to justice. Some of them are feeling the heat—in December former Khmer Rouge head of state Khieu Samphan made the first high-level admission that genocide had indeed happened during the regime's rule, though he pleaded ignorance of the details at the time. Building on the momentum, this January the president of the current ruling party spoke out in support of international tribunals for Khmer Rouge senior leaders.

"We can surely bring a complete closure to this darkest chapter through a successful implementation of...a tribunal for prosecuting crimes," Cambodian People's Party (CPP) president Chea Sim said at the twenty-fifth-anniversary celebration at party headquarters.

Easier said than done, Cambodians point out, especially when the darkness isn't confined to the Khmer Rouge period. At least 10,000 people would come together again only a few weeks later, this time to mourn Chea Vichea. His killing was the latest in a series of high-profile attacks that erupted after contested elections last year—the CPP won a large number of parliamentary seats but failed to get the two-thirds majority required to govern alone. In response, the two runner-up parties charged Prime Minister Hun Sen and the CPP with voter intimidation and election fraud, formed an alliance with each other, demanded Hun Sen's resignation and pulled out of negotiations. The result was a disastrous deadlock that left Cambodia with a spate of unsolved murders of opposition-alliance supporters and no functioning government—a situation that only now seems to be approaching resolution. In early June Hun Sen and one of the alliance partners agreed on a political platform after months of failed negotiations. But even if talks are finally holding together, there's no quick escape from Cambodia's political quagmire: Now the arduous, time-consuming and contentious tasks of forming a government and dealing with postelection violence and backlogged legislation lie ahead.

Noy Thrupkaew, who writes frequently about foreign affairs and culture, reported from Cambodia on a Pew International Journalism Fellowship.

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One of the bills stymied by the political impasse is the legislation on the Khmer Rouge tribunals. After nearly five years of heated debate, the UN and the Cambodian government had finally agreed on moving forward with the trials. But without a government to ratify the agreement, the tribunals have remained at a standstill. Human rights activists point out a Catch-22: A culture of impunity, lawlessness and political violence persists that has its roots in the crimes of the Khmer Rouge era—and insures that those crimes go unpunished.

"We can't go ahead, we can't go back," said K. We were talking before his midnight shift at the reception desk. "What is the word?"

"Stuck," I said.

"Yes," he said. "We are stuck."

Touch Srey Nich is lucky, in a way. She's still alive. On October 21 four men drove up on motorcycles and shot the 24-year-old singer outside a Phnom Penh flower shop. The doctor at the hospital where she was first taken showed me the trajectory of the bullets—one through her mouth, shattering her teeth; one across the cheekbone; and the last in the back of the neck as she fell. Her body may recover, the doctor says, but as for her brain? He shrugs futilely. Her mother died trying to shield her. Also dead is journalist Chuor Chetharith, who shared the singer's open allegiance to the royalist party FUNCINPEC, which, along with the Sam Rainsy Party, forms the alliance opposing the CPP.

I asked one young Cambodian what should happen to the Khmer Rouge. 'Just shoot them,' he says. 'Kill them all.'

Chea Vichea's murder was the most shocking yet. One of the founders of the Sam Rainsy Party, Chea also established one of the country's most influential unions and helped negotiate a US-Cambodia bilateral trade agreement that linked improved labor standards to garment quotas. His death now casts the labor-friendly reputation of Cambodia's garment industry into doubt—a huge potential setback for the industry, which provides 235,000 jobs and fuels 36 percent of the economy. Chea's anti-corruption crusading, run-ins with management and police during strikes, and political ties made him a ripe target. But which one of his adversaries pulled the trigger? Given the country's notoriously corrupt law-enforcement and judicial system, Cambodians are not likely to get an answer anytime soon, if ever. "Unfortunately, Cambodia has a poor track record in bringing to justice the perpetrators of political killings," says Human Rights Watch senior researcher Sara Colm.

It's an observation borne out by the experience of the UN, which spent years—once even pulling out of talks entirely—battling Hun Sen's insistence that a majority of the judges on Khmer Rouge tribunals be Cambodian. The UN and Cambodia eventually hammered out a draft agreement in 2003, with a Cambodian-majority formula, balanced by the presence of international judges—but not before UN Secretary General Kofi Annan expressed his concern at the "continued problems related to the rule of law and the functioning of the judiciary in Cambodia resulting from interference by the executive with the independence of the judiciary." Hun Sen, he seemed to imply, could not be trusted to keep his strongman hands to himself.

For someone who bills himself and his party as Cambodia's savior from the Khmer Rouge, Hun Sen is taking an odd approach. Ever since he deserted from the Khmer Rouge and returned with the Vietnamese, he has played a key part in the government, including the role of prime minister, since 1993. As a country that is a former French colony, that was occupied by the Japanese during World War II and heavily bombed by the United States during the Vietnam War, Cambodia is understandably protective of its sovereignty. But there are other reasons for Hun Sen's demand that the tribunal judges be mostly Cambodian: The CPP leadership is stocked with former Khmer Rouge, some of whom may fear a judicial process that sheds a harsh light on the past, and Cambodian judges will be easier to manipulate.

In addition, in the wake of the final surrender of the deposed Khmer Rouge movement in 1998, Hun Sen embarked upon a generous reintegration policy that might not bear up under scrutiny now. Only two Khmer Rouge leaders have been imprisoned—Brother Number Four, or Mok, the former military commander who fought to the very end, and Kang Khek Ieu, or Duch, who as the head of the central detention center scrawled "Kill them all" over lists of prisoners and oversaw the deaths of at least 14,000 Cambodians who passed through the gates of Tuol Sleng.

With Cambodia's current turmoil, those two may be the only leaders to pay for their crimes, at least in the near future. No government, no tribunal, no budget for anything, said the hotel staff. The political deadlock became our running joke—"Hey, you got a government, yet?" "No. Government's not working, so I'm not working," the staff said, pretending to steal money and sleep behind the desk.

We cackled with laughter, but it was hard to ignore the deep dysfunction—the loss of momentum for the tribunals; the shootings; stymied funds to address everything from the HIV crisis to the roads that Cambodians valiantly try to patch with broken concrete and pottery; the lack of a strong middle class, which so often plays a part in democratizing countries; the lack of willpower to stem the system of corruption that greases the hands of judges, police, even teachers and nonprofit workers. "Oh, Ms. Noy," said S. after I straggled home from reporting about Touch Srey Nich's shooting. "Did you see this? They learned that Cambodia's biggest de-mining NGO is taking bribes."

Cambodia's past and present rub up against each other most brutally at places like the Choeung Ek killing fields. Tourists gingerly examine burial pits and victims' pitiful, naked skulls, many of them with holes stoved in the back, while beggar children and amputees give hot pursuit—the Khmer Rouge and its legacy, in one horrifying experience. Driving back from Choeung Ek, 30-year-old B. told me how his mother forgave the Khmer Rouge cadres in their village who had abducted his father. "She said she is not a judge. But she said they will get in their next life what they did in this one. Karma." He paused, maneuvering around a car-sized pothole. "But I think there must be justice in this life, too. We need a trial. No one can be over the law—the Khmer Rouge, the government." This conversation resurfaced several days later, after he dramatically blew through a red light. "They don't respect the law; I don't respect

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it, too." He grinned, at once bitter and laughing.

Even when it was a joke, the blistering anger never failed to surprise. It showed up in the unlikeliest places, as with K., who, like many young Cambodians I met, conducts himself with an Old World courtesy and sensitivity that belies both his teenage years and the political environment in which he was raised. As we sat on a park bench, drinking fruit shakes out of plastic bags, he gestured at the prostitutes on the corner, dazzlingly made up, depressingly young. "It starts when a girl is born," he said. I hadn't even asked, but he started ticking off the inequities on his fine-boned hands. Parents don't think girls need an education, so then there are fewer jobs for women and they are paid less, the domestic abuse problem, the healthcare issues, the squandered opportunities, the pervasive discrimination. "How can my country be developed when half of us suffer?"

I expected similarly sensitive insights when I asked K. about the Khmer Rouge leaders. I was forgetting, however, the depth of rage and despair expressed by other Cambodians on this topic. Cambodian genocide scholar Craig Etcheson recounted one elderly woman's thoughts on how to bring Khmer Rouge leader Pol Pot to justice in 1997, one year before he died: Give each Cambodian—10 million at the time—a razor blade. Bring Pol Pot before the people. Each person will make one cut.

I had also forgotten how K.'s face had clouded during a previous conversation about the impact of the Khmer Rouge—"Their hearts are not humans' hearts. I don't want to still keep thinking about those cruel animals. They left us like this. Now my country is like a broken thing, but they are still OK. And I don't know why—why they did it, why for everything."

So when I asked him what should happen to the Khmer Rouge, I shouldn't have been surprised at his reply. But I was. His answer was swift. "Kill them."

What? No trial?

"OK, yes, a trial." His face twisted in anger, and he raised a thumb and forefinger. "And then just shoot them. Kill them all." ■

LETTERS
CONTINUED

(Continued From Page 2)
niversary of the Brown v. Board of Education *decision. Herewith, a sample. —The Editors*

Corvallis, Ore.

■ The first time the federal courts dealt with the issue of public school desegregation was not in 1954 but in 1946, with the case of *Mendez v. Westminister School District*. The Ninth District Court of Appeals ruled that the segregation of Mexican-American children, based on their ethnicity in Orange County, California, violated the Fourteenth Amendment. *Mendez* was closely watched by the NAACP and was instrumental in designing the legal strategy that would later go into *Brown*.

The second case was *Hernandez v. Texas*, decided only two months before *Brown*. This was the first case ever argued by Mexican-American attorneys before the Supreme Court. In *Hernandez*, the Court ruled that the Fourteenth Amendment's equal protection clause did not apply only to African-Americans and whites. The Court ruled that the Constitution prohibited discrimination based on race *period*, opening the way for other historically oppressed groups to seek legal remedy. Knowing these legal connections reminds us that the struggle for civil rights has always been a cross-cultural effort and keeps us aware of the need today for multicultural coalitions in the ongoing effort for racial equality. JOSÉ-ANTONIO OROSCO

Minneapolis

■ I was dismayed to see no mention of the way American Indian nations were, or were not, impacted by *Brown*. As Vine Deloria once remarked, African-Americans were treated as draft animals; American Indians, as wild animals. The parallels and divergences go on from there. In the same year as *Brown*, the government embarked on one of its more disastrous policies, the termination of a number of tribes (e.g., the Menominee of Wisconsin and the Klamath of Oregon) as political and legal entities. While many African-Americans welcomed *Brown*, American Indians fought what was termed their "Emancipation Proclamation."

Other comparisons abound. In 1896, when the Court handed down *Plessy*, establishing the separate-but-equal principle, it also, the very same day, handed down *Talton v. Mayes*, a case in which the Court correctly held that Indian nations were not subject to the Constitution and could prosecute their own citizens for murder.

In 1903, the year W.E.B. Du Bois published *The Souls of Black Folk*, the Supreme Court handed down *Lone Wolf v. Hitchcock*, in which the Court held that treaty-established resources and rights could be unilaterally abrogated by the government. One senator described it as "the Dred Scott decision No. 2, except that in this case the victim is red instead of black."

While many blacks have gained a measure of inclusion in society, many American Indians seek to retain a measure of exclusion because of their pre-constitutional status, treaty rights and reserved lands. DAVID E. WILKINS

Westport, Conn.

■ I was pleased to read of the critical role played by Dr. Kenneth Clark and his wife, Mamie. The so-called doll study Dr. Clark used in testing black children in segregated schools proved that as a result of segregation, these children had a poor self-image. This contribution of the Clarks, social scientists, was credited by Justice Warren Burger in the unanimous landmark opinion in what has become known as "Footnote 11" of the decision. In my book, *Toward Justice and Humanity: The Writings of Dr. Kenneth B. Clark, Scholar of the* Brown v. Board of Education *Decision*, I point out that this was the first time in the Court's history that it admitted social science studies as hard evidence. It also catapulted Dr. Clark into a leading role as a civil rights activist in the 1960s, when he worked behind the scenes with Robert F. Kennedy and virtually all the nationally known civil rights leaders. He is a hidden hero of the *Brown* decision. WOODY KLEIN

Fort Wayne, Ind.

■ One success story of desegregation in the North: In 1989, Fort Wayne Community Schools and a biracial group of parents agreed to an out-of-court settlement that made every one of the district's fifty-three schools racially balanced. That's more than 35,000 children who attend classes every day with kids of a different color. Minority kids continue to close the achievement gap. To be sure, the formal requirements of the settlement expired with the 1996–97 school year. But the magnet program that created such a success remains in effect, more popular than ever. In fact, you no longer hear a whisper of controversy. No one clamors for a return to neighborhood schools. *Brown*'s legacy here still means equal opportunity for every child. LARRY HAYES

Baltimore

■ I was sorry none of the writers looking back at *Brown* looked forward with a broader vision. The problem today is not only that far too many people of color are still cut off from opportunity for a good life but also that more and more other people are as well. The plutocrats and would-be oligarchs would be only too happy to see middle-class liberals speak solely in terms of racial justice, but at this stage in our history racial justice has to be integrated into a broader program of social justice that recognizes what is happening to working-class and poor people. There are grassroots groups and some unions that are working at it, but many well-intentioned people still need to learn.

KATHARINE W. RYLAARSDAM

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COMMENT

(Continued From Page 8)

tions, the coercion or the torture has made us safer. On the contrary, there is every reason to believe that they have made us less safe, by inspiring the unprecedented level of anti-Americanism so evident around the world. That anti-Americanism is the greatest threat to our national security. For that we have George W. Bush to thank. DAVID COLE

David Cole, The Nation*'s legal affairs correspondent, is the author of* Enemy Aliens: Double Standards and Constitutional Freedoms in the War on Terrorism.

Solidarity in Wartime

In a Service Employees union hall in Boston, a hospital worker raises her hand. "If Saddam Hussein was such a bad guy," she asks, "why is the US enforcing his law banning unions in Iraq?"

Since January, workers like this orderly have been listening to the answers to their questions given by Iraqi workers themselves, courtesy of US Labor Against the War, a network that now includes dozens of union locals and labor councils nationally. USLAW's campaign for labor rights in Iraq is also bringing reports, videos and testimony of American unionists who have traveled to Iraq into union halls in California, Washington, Michigan, Ohio, Maryland, Pennsylvania, New York, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Washington, DC, and beyond. As a result, hundreds of union members have suddenly been able to see Iraq not just as a scene of violent conflict but as a complex nation of 24 million people, with trade unions, political parties and civil organizations trying desperately to win back control of their country.

USLAW's campaign is aimed at unmasking the occupation's economic agenda, the hallmarks of which are privatizing Iraq's state-owned factories and workplaces (still the employer of most Iraqi workers); enforcing salaries that begin at $40 a month to attract investment from foreign corporations; and imposing a 1987 decree banning unions in state-owned plants, while prohibiting advocacy leading to "civil disorder." In December coalition troops even arrested leaders of the Iraqi Federation of Workers' Trade Unions and the Union of the Unemployed and threw the IFTU out of its offices.

The IFTU's veteran organizers, however, who survived Saddam Hussein's regime underground or in exile, have reorganized since its fall. Basra has seen three general strikes since the occupation began. In January new unions in the southern oil fields and refineries defeated the Coalition Provisional Authority's attempts to lower wages and forced Halliburton to abandon plans for replacing them with foreign workers for reconstruction work. "Iraq will be reconstructed by Iraqis," says Hassan Juma, a head of the union at the Southern Oil Company.

The IFTU and another new union, the Federation of Workers' Councils and Unions, are challenging the occupation's economic program and have appealed for support from US labor. Felah Alwan, secretary of the Workers' Councils and Unions, says, "The first thing we need is that you say that we exist!" A unionist from a brickyard near Baghdad, where armed workers stopped the recruitment of strikebreakers, asked visiting US unionists to "explain to the whole world what happens here."

In the meetings organized by USLAW, support for Iraqi workers is pouring forth. The campaign highlights connections between the war abroad and Bush's war on labor at home, through common policies such as a ban on union organizing (enforced within the Department of Homeland Security) and privatization. "If this is what the occupation means, I can understand why Iraqi unions don't want it," one worker at the Boston meeting remarked.

In the United States, labor opposition to the occupation is moving well beyond the core of solidarity activists. Labor councils that rarely speak out on foreign policy hosted a February road tour by the USLAW delegation. In January AFL-CIO president John Sweeney condemned enforcement of the 1987 law and called on the CPA's Paul Bremer and the Iraqi Governing Council "to allow Iraqi workers to associate together and participate collectively in rebuilding the economy." The AFL-CIO has been very quiet on the war since last year's invasion, and Sweeney's statement was a welcome change. Some members of Congress have started collecting signatures on a letter demanding that Defense Secretary Rumsfeld explain why unions are banned in Baghdad.

Iraq's new unions want to rewrite the country's labor laws to guarantee their right to organize, bargain and strike while preserving historic protections for national healthcare, housing and education. Their proposals challenge the CPA's free-market reforms, like its decrees this past September privatizing state enterprises, allowing foreign ownership and unlimited repatriation of profits, imposing a 15 percent flat tax and abolishing housing and food subsidies for workers. Bremer's "new constitution" forbids any replacement caretaker government from changing these measures.

Just as Iraqi unionists seek US labor support, the Administration wants American unions to assist in imposing this neoliberal model on Iraq. In an Orwellian moment, Bush announced in his State of the Union address that the occupation would lead to "free labor unions" in the Middle East. Soon after, the National Endowment for Democracy announced that it intends to supply funds for programs in Iraq to build such unions. The NED has a long, unsavory cold war history, abetting coups in Chile and Brazil, war in Central America and attacks on militant unions around the world. Funding US labor solidarity work with NED dollars would involve the AFL-CIO in helping to administer the very occupation that Iraqi workers and unions oppose. To build real labor solidarity, US unions must be willing to challenge the Bush/Bremer program, which means finding other resources to do this vital work.

Some voices in labor and the Democratic Party counsel that unions will lose in November if they campaign on the war. But they won't be able to duck this fight. National security has been the justification for every Bush antilabor attack, and it is the bedrock of his campaign. Fortunately, if the response from Washington to Boston is any indication, unions increasingly see their own interest in opposing Bush both at home and in Iraq. DAVID BACON

David Bacon is the author of The Children of NAFTA *(California).*

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BOOKS & THE ARTS

On Native Ground

DAVID L. ULIN

SWEET LAND STORIES. By E.L. Doctorow. Random House. 147 pp. $22.95.

I've long considered E.L. Doctorow the most American of contemporary writers—in a particularly classic sense. To look back over his career is to see a psychic map of our obsessions, from the legends of the Old West to the betrayals of the cold war to the warp and woof of US history itself. In *The Book of Daniel*, the adult son of a couple very much like Julius and Ethel Rosenberg wrestles with the failed promises of American democracy, the way freedom often yields to hysteria. In *Billy Bathgate*, meanwhile, a Depression-era Bronx street urchin finds salvation through his association with the gangster Dutch Schultz, who offers him a wider outlook on the world. What's astonishing is not just Doctorow's insistence on a larger mythos but his ability to write continually from outside his experience. It's an aesthetic that would be compelling in any era, yet seems especially so at the present, when we define ourselves in pieces, and the ideal of American identity has been reduced to a cliché.

For Doctorow, however, our divisions mask a deeper quality of connection, a vision of America as both real and metaphorical, a place where we invent ourselves as we go along. Even when he takes on the tropes of his Jewish immigrant heritage—as in *World's Fair*, his most autobiographical novel, or parts of *The Book of Daniel*—he always ties this material to some idea of social movement larger than himself. In that regard, Doctorow is less the spiritual descendant of, say, Henry Roth or Saul Bellow than a writer like John Dos Passos, since for him the personal story is but a single thread in a more encompassing narrative, and the most important elements are those that bind us rather than set us apart.

Unlike Dos Passos, Doctorow hasn't become a reactionary as he's grown older; if anything, he's opened up his point of view. His last novel, *City of God*, operates like an exploding universe; composed in fragments, it tells the story of a disaffected Episcopal priest who falls in love with a Reconstructionist rabbi, although at heart it's about spiritual crisis, about what happens when we recognize that God is unresponsive, or at least beyond our comprehension, inaccessible to any meaningful extent. This is very much an American dilemma, and Doctorow's achievement is to infuse the book with a taste of good old-fashioned transcendentalism, albeit transposed to a less contemplative age. In many ways, *City of God*'s cacophony of voices—there are literally dozens of speakers, from Wittgenstein and Einstein to more modern figures—is a vivid reminder of our social dissonance, all our endlessly competing narratives. How, the novel wonders, are we to find meaning when meaning is entirely relative, on both the individual and the cosmic plain? Such a question, of course, can drive you crazy, can lead to fundamentalism or despair. Yet even at his most abstract, Doctorow remains a humanist, which means that, for him, what's important is the asking—or, more accurately, the way we deal with these uncertainties. Whether or not we occupy a godless universe, we must find a passage, an angle of connection, a way to root ourselves. Read

In his most overtly American work since Billy Bathgate, *Doctorow writes of life on the fringes, where even myth has deserted us.*

David L. Ulin is the author of The Myth of Solid Ground: Earthquakes, Prediction, and the Fault Line Between Reason and Faith, *to be published by Viking Penguin in August. He edited* Another City: Writing From Los Angeles *(City Lights) and* Writing Los Angeles: A Literary Anthology *(Library of America).*

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like this, the struggle Doctorow evokes here mirrors that of all his characters, who are seeking a foothold, a strategy for understanding, even as they recognize (as *City of God* makes uncomfortably explicit) that understanding will not save them in the end.

Doctorow's new book, *Sweet Land Stories*, also treads the fine line between despair and fundamentalism, although in a more direct manner than *City of God*. What's at stake, in other words, is not the cosmos but something considerably narrower: a handful of individual souls. Featuring five longish pieces of short fiction, *Sweet Land Stories* is, in many ways, a volume of shards, a collection of marginal lives. The characters it portrays, essentially one to a story, are castoffs, abandoned by history, buffeted by circumstance. There's Lester, a loosely employed drifter whose girlfriend, Karen, kidnaps an infant from a local hospital, then claims it as her own. Or Jolene, liberated from foster care by a teenage marriage, only to end up with a succession of unscrupulous men. These are Americans, to be sure; in fact, *Sweet Land Stories* is Doctorow's most overtly American work since *Billy Bathgate*, a state reflected by its title, which may or may not be intended as irony. Either way, the America we discover here is an America of diminished expectations, in which both myth and meaning have deserted us, and we are left with nowhere to turn. That idea is woven into the very nature of the collection, with its implication that none of these people are necessary enough to support an entire novel of their own. Rather, with *Sweet Land Stories*, Doctorow shifts his focus inward, giving us a glimpse of America on the fringes, of what happens when it all goes wrong.

Lest we think of this as a quintessentially modern phenomenon, Doctorow begins *Sweet Land Stories* with "A House on the Plains," the collection's one piece of historical fiction, which takes place in the Midwest in the late nineteenth century. It's a period the author has always been comfortable re-creating: *Ragtime* exposed the falsely formal facades of *fin de siècle* America with an understated elegance, while *The Waterworks* brought a similar sensibility to 1870s New York. Here, though, Doctorow plays against expectation by offering an unreliable narrator, who follows his middle-aged mother from Chicago to an isolated farmstead "fifty miles west of the city line." Some money is involved, an inheritance, but the circumstances are murky, and before long, we begin to notice an atmosphere of foreboding, a sense that things are not quite as they seem. Partly, this has to do with the mother's insistence that her son call her Aunt Dora, but even more, it is the lucent starkness of the plains. "Chicago," the narrator tells us, "could stand up under the worst God had to offer. I understood why it was built—a place for trade, of course, with railroads and ships and so on, but mostly to give all of us a magnitude of defiance that is not provided by one house on the plains." What Doctorow is suggesting is that all our great works, our cities and societies, are little more than shared illusions thrown up in the face of the abyss. Without them, we are hopelessly exposed, not only to the elements but to our fundamental selves. This gives the story an air of existentialism, in which we see the origins of our own America, which reflects nothing if not such an attitude. "A House on the Plains," then, sets the stage for the remainder of the collection, which is populated by the literary offspring of this character, who, like them, considers himself to be "a stranger in a strange land."

In Doctorow's America, fundamentalism is the other face of despair, and religious fervor is as oppressive as a dream gone sour.

This idea—this very phrase, even—emerges again and again throughout *Sweet Land Stories*, until it becomes a motif. It's as if, without a common point of reference, we can't help but unravel, a process that these stories all record. Nowhere is this more vividly delineated than in "Baby Wilson" and "Walter John Harmon," both of which traffic in millennial obsessions, the way faith often functions as a divisive force. It's tempting to compare such pieces to *City of God*, which was itself a book of millennial obsessions, but here the fervor is as oppressive as a dream gone sour. In "Baby Wilson," Lester and Karen go on the run with their stolen baby, whom she has rechristened Jesu, the ultimate virgin birth. Again, Doctorow remains ambiguous about the ironies, peppering the narrative with religious symbolism, from the makeshift family's odyssey through the desert to the longing for redemption that pervades nearly every mile of their journey like a promise or a curse. "And from all of this," Lester reflects, "and the sun lighting our way ahead like a golden road, I had this revelation of a new life for myself, a life I had never thought of aspiring to, where I would be someone's husband and someone else's father, dependable, holding down a full-time job, and building a place in the world for himself and his family. So that when he died they would mourn grievously and bless his departing spirit for the love and respectable life he had given them." It's a profound sentiment, heartfelt and connective, but bittersweet because Lester is already lost. The same is true of "Walter John Harmon," which is narrated by an elder of a Branch Davidian–style religious order ("We are not idiots," he warns. "We are not cult victims."), who has forsaken everything, even his wife, to escape the chaos of modernity. Although his tone is never anything but reasonable, in the end he also yields to chaos, ordering a wall erected around the community's compound that will afford "a clear and unimpeded field of fire."

What makes these stories work is Doctorow's empathy for his characters, his ability to get inside their isolation and let us experience it, too. It's a remarkable transference, in which we find ourselves sympathizing with a kidnapper, or a religious fanatic gearing up for a final, apocalyptic confrontation, "a devastating enfilade." This, of course, is the job of fiction, which, Doctorow has written, "goes everywhere, inside, outside, it stops, it goes, its action can be mental.... [It] can do anything in the dark horrors of consciousness." Still more, it has to do with the fact that, on whatever level, we recognize these people, and feel the way they do. "Perhaps, as the prophet says," the narrator of "Walter John Harmon" suggests, "the time for documentation comes only when the world overtakes us." Regardless, Doctorow means to tell us that we are long past transcendence, at the vanishing point of history, in the place where desperation leads. Even the collection's two lesser efforts—"Jolene: A Life" and "Child, Dead, in the Rose Garden"—evoke such textures, although they are diminished by Doctorow's failure to imagine himself fully into their worlds. This is especially problematic in the latter story, which involves the discovery of a child's corpse on the White House grounds after a National Arts and Humanities Awards celebration and crosses the line from narrative into social criticism in an unfortunate way. "Wouldn't you think it figures, from this crowd," a White House liaison asks the FBI agent investigating the case, "something disgusting like this? The desecration of a beloved piece of ground? Not that I ever expect the artists, the writers, to show gratitude to the country they live in. They're all knee-jerk anti-Americans." Here alone in the collection, Doctorow seems like a writer with an ax to grind, with a political rather than a cultural agenda,

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which undermines the power of his work.

Ultimately, however, "Child, Dead, in the Rose Garden" is oddly consistent with the rest of *Sweet Land Stories*—in spite of its flaws. What more vivid example of a stranger in a strange land do we need, after all, than a dead child at the White House, a child whose body was stolen, it turns out, to make a political point? In a very real sense, that child is a reflection of the kidnapped infant in "Baby Wilson," or the forsaken narrators of "Walter John Harmon" and "A House on the Plains." All of them are lost, adrift in an indifferent universe, united in their disassociation from the American dream. "It was three in the morning by then," Doctorow writes in "Jolene: A Life," "but all the streetlights were on and the traffic signals were going, though not a human being was in sight. It was all busyness on that empty street in its silence, all the store signs blazing away, the neon colors in the windows, the laundromat, the check-cashing store, the one-hour photo and passport, the newsdealer, the coffee shop, and the dry cleaner's, and the parking meters looking made of gold under the amber light of the street lamps. It was the world going on as if people were the last thing it needed or wanted." This is the psychic landscape of these stories, these dispatches from the dark night of the American soul. ■

Ugly Beauty

MELANIE REHAK

COLLECTED POEMS. By Philip Larkin. Edited by Anthony Thwaite. Farrar, Straus & Giroux. 218 pp. Paper $14.

In the fall of 1958, the second book by a young British poet named Philip Larkin made it across the ocean and into the consciousness of American poetry. *The Less Deceived*, wrote a reviewer for the *New York Times*, made him feel "as if my glasses had been miraculously wiped clean." Included in it were some of the poems that would become Larkin's most emblematic: "Toads," with its characteristically cranky opening line "Why should I let the toad *work*/Squat on my life?"; the lovely, elegiac "Church Going," which offers one of the most human moments in all of modern poetry, a description of the nonbeliever entering a sacred space in uncertainty: "Hatless, I take off/ My cycle-clips in awkward reverence"; and "Lines on a Young Lady's Photograph Album," which sums up the muted passions and predilections of the poet who would become beloved in spite of his incessant gloominess.

> But o, photography! As no art is,
> Faithful and disappointing! that records
> Dull days as dull, and hold-it smiles as
> frauds,
> And will not censor blemishes
> Like washing-lines, and Hall's-
> Distemper boards,
>
> But shows the cat as disinclined, and
> shades
> A chin as doubled when it is

Larkin transposed his wry pessimism exquisitely into fluid, formal verse that reads like good conversation. If life was a repository for huge, existential disappointment, it was clearly best to just say so and get on with it. Or at least, this was what he announced in poems and public comments, which were often laced with high sardonic moments. (Interviewer: How did you arrive upon the image of a toad for work or labor? Larkin: Sheer genius.) By now, the catalogue of his quips on his disillusionment with everything from the thought of being poet laureate of England ("I dream about that sometimes—and wake up screaming"); to his own appearance ("a balding salmon"); to his general *Weltanschauung* ("deprivation is to me what daffodils were to Wordsworth") is a familiar part of Larkin's carefully built, curmudgeonly identity. His best-known poem, at least in the minds of those who are not in the habit of reading poetry, begins with the memorable stanza: "They fuck you up, your mum and dad./ They may not mean to, but they do./They fill you with the faults they had/And add some extra, just for you." This, of course, is Larkin lite; it's missing the lyricism that rescues even his most depressive poems from whiny banality. A line further along in the same poem, however, hints at the true depth of both the poet's pathology and his gift—"Man hands on misery to man./ It deepens like a coastal shelf."

"This Be the Verse" appeared in Larkin's extraordinary fourth book, *High Windows*. That he chose to include it is not insignificant, since he produced only four slender volumes of poetry in his lifetime (he died at 63 of throat cancer, reaching out for his nurse's hand and croaking "I am going to the inevitable" as he did, grimly resigned even in his last moments on earth). In a Kafkaesque move, he planned to torch all his personal papers, and later, when he became ill, asked that all his journals, letters and uncollected poems be destroyed. Thankfully, his near and dear ones thought the better of this request and failed to carry it through in entirety. As it turned out, Larkin had included a series of contradictory instructions in his will, giving the lie to his dramatic statements about making a bonfire. One of his girlfriends (about which more later) disposed of his diaries in a shredder at the University of Hull, where Larkin had been a librarian for more than twenty-five years. The rest of his papers remained, including correspondence from as far back as his college days, when he attended Oxford with Kingsley Amis, who became a lifelong friend.

When an edition of these letters and a biography based in large part upon them were finally released in the early 1990s, it suddenly became clear that Larkin, though he was unrepentant about his attitudes, might have thought to destroy his things because he knew how his private persona would be received. "Philip Larkin...was an anti-Semite and a racist [with] a vicious streak of misogyny" ran one brief announcement of the books' appearance. Indeed, all these things were true; the girlfriend who had performed shredding duty was one of a long-suffering pair, both of whom knew about each other and neither of whom Larkin felt compelled to give up. Buried in his letters were nasty little rhymes like "How to Win the Next Election": "Prison for the strikers/Bring back the cat/Kick out the niggers/How about that?" As for the biography, it revealed that Larkin's father had been an ardent fascist and fan of Hitler, and that the apple had not fallen all that far from the tree. In 1940 Larkin wrote to a friend: "Germany will win this war like a dose of salts, and if (saying) that gets me into a gaol, a bloody good job, too. Balls to the war. Balls to a good many things, events, people and institutions." By 1942, he was writing to another friend: "If there is any new life in the world

Melanie Rehak is a Mel and Lois Tukman Fellow at the New York Public Library's Cullman Center for Scholars and Writers, where she is working on a book about the history of Nancy Drew.

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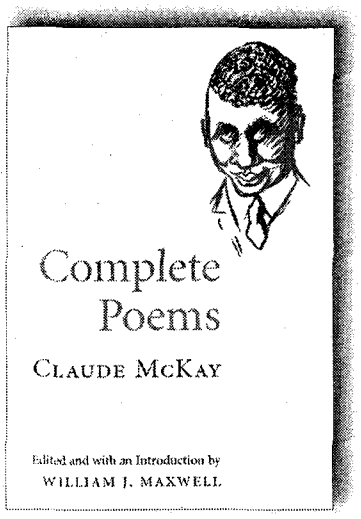
THE POETRY OF PROTEST



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today, it is in Germany." While he did think the Nazis had gone to extremes, he thought they "may have many valuable new habits." These unpleasant revelations set off, for the umpteenth time, the debate about whether it was possible to like the work of a person who was, to put it mildly, profoundly unlikable.

Indeed. For after the chatter died down, there was still the poetry itself, as pristine and powerful as it always had been. Undecided as he was about his papers, Larkin was not ambivalent about the work he chose to publish. He picked and discarded his poems ruthlessly and by design; Anthony Thwaite, the editor of both the 1988 and new editions of Larkin's collected poems, quotes the poet in his introduction: "I treat them like a music-hall bill: you know, contrast, difference in length, the comic, the Irish tenor, bring on the girls." In truth, Larkin had produced far more work than anyone suspected; among his papers were the drafts of finished and unfinished poems dating back to 1938. And so it was that when the first edition of the collected poems came out, Thwaite included everything beginning in 1946 and arranged it chronologically, giving readers the chance to see Larkin whole as opposed to Larkin by Larkin. The book also included an appendix of juvenilia dating from 1938 to 1945, to which the poems in *The North Ship* (1945), Larkin's first book, were relegated.

Now comes Thwaite's new edition, which presents only the poems Larkin wanted published, in the order in which they appeared (again there is an appendix at the back, this time of poems that appeared in magazines as opposed to books). Among other things, it restores *The North Ship* to the beginning of the book, allowing us glimpses of the Larkin who would bloom into rich, wistful distemper in his next volume. "The moon is full tonight/And hurts the eyes," he writes, turning a romantic vision sour with four short syllables. A few pages later, he stumbles toward the beginnings of the sorrowful cadence that would become his perennial tone: "And now again/My thoughts are children/With uneasy faces." You can literally hear the poet finding his voice throughout the book, though it's surrounded, and somewhat obscured, by less certain passages. Still, who wouldn't recognize the mature Larkin—the obsession with women, the desire for resolution, the giving in to an endless cycle of misery—in these lines?

Among the rain and stone places
I find only an ancient sadness falling,
Only hurrying and troubled faces,
The walking of girls' vulnerable feet,
The heart in its own endless silence
kneeling.

But, just as some quibbled when Thwaite diverged from Larkin's chosen path in his previous collection, there are absences in this new edition that also diminish it—a problem that Thwaite admits freely in his introduction and that really has more to do with Larkin's assessment of his own work than Thwaite's stewardship of it. In particular, a pair of poems, one each about his father and his mother, are missing, both of them humming with beauty and trouble like the very best of Larkin's work, both of them unpublished in his lifetime. Here he is in 1948, once again pondering the human rat race of unhappiness after the death of his father, combining it with fragility and a rather stunning revelation at the end of the poem that is no less devastating for its delicacy:

An April Sunday brings the snow
Making the blossom on the plum trees
green,
Not white. An hour or two and it will
go.
Strange that I spend that hour moving
between

Cupboard and cupboard, shifting the
store
Of jam you made of fruit from these
same trees:
Five loads—a hundred pounds or
more—
More than enough for all next summer's teas,

Which now you will not sit and eat.
Behind the glass, under cellophane,
Remains your final summer—sweet
And meaningless, and not to come
again.

The enjambments alone, which carry the poem along over crests of loss, transform the sentences into a single current of barely restrained anguish. That Larkin manages to use them without crushing the emotion they describe is almost reason enough to read him.

And then, in 1953, there was "Mother, Summer, I," clearly written with the ghost of Thomas Hardy hovering nearby:

My mother, who hates thunderstorms,
Hold up each summer day and shakes
It out suspiciously, lest swarms
Of grape-dark clouds are lurking there;
But when the August weather breaks
And rains begin, and brittle frost

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Sharpens the bird-abandoned air,
Her worried summer look is lost.

And I her son, though summer-born
And summer-loving, none the less
Am easier when leaves are gone;
Too often summer days appear
Emblems of perfect happiness
I can't confront: I must await
A time less bold, less rich, less clear:
An autumn more appropriate.

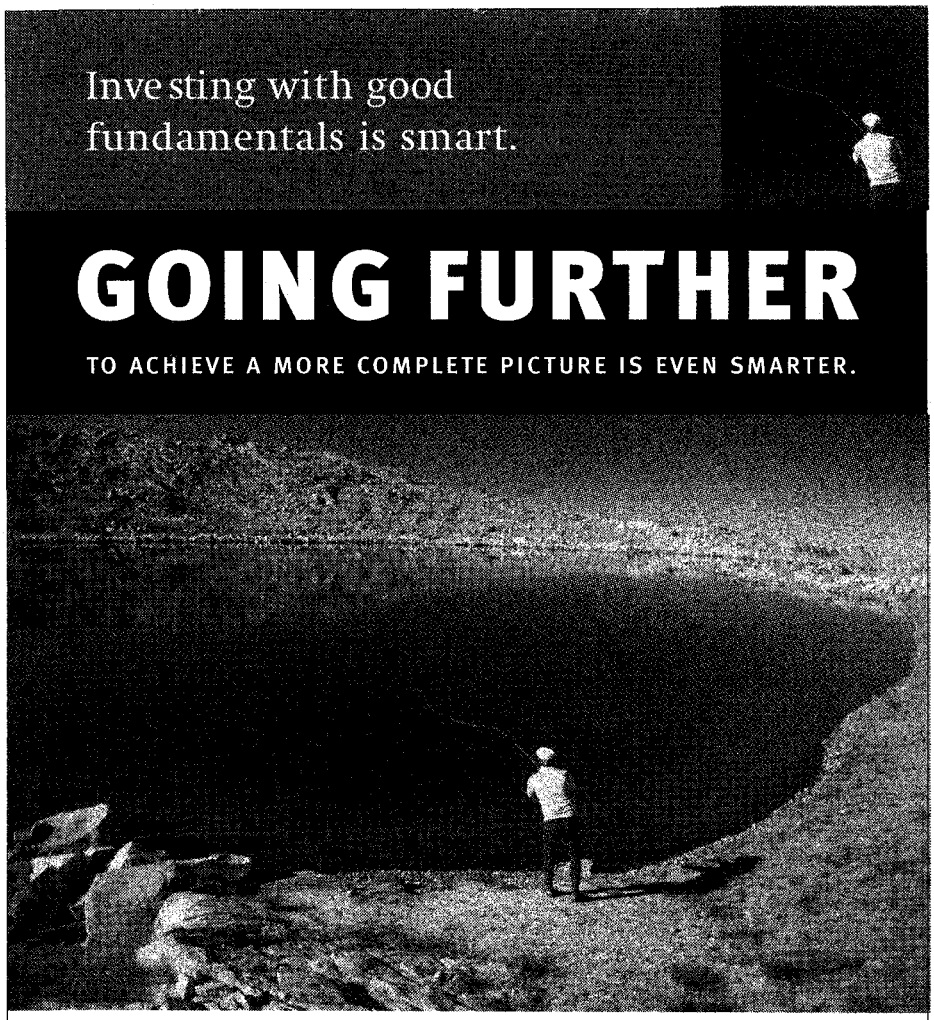
What starts off as a seemingly lighthearted digression on weather, gathers, like the clouds it depicts, into a somber confession with enormous implications.

Larkin was always waiting for elusive perfect conditions, always looking for some place to be settled, and he was always foiled. He noted at one point in a poem that "Nothing, like something, happens anywhere," echoing it later in another meditation on his discomfort called "The Importance of Elsewhere." His poems document, more than anything else, the fear of giving in to pure pleasure—those "emblems of perfect happiness"—in the face of the knowledge that it would all evaporate someday. It was an understanding Larkin could not will away, and it colored his daily existence right down to his inability to choose between women. "Truly, though, our element is time," he wrote in 1955 in a poem called "Reference Back." "We are not suited to the long perspectives/Open at each instant of our lives./They link us to our losses: worse,/They show us what we have as it once was,/Blindingly undiminished, just as though/By acting differently we could have kept it so."

This amazement at the relentlessness of his struggle comes across perhaps most startlingly in the title poem of *High Windows*, Larkin's last book. He reflects on how carefree the next generation appears to be ("everyone young going down the long slide/To happiness, endlessly" and then realizes that his elders must have thought the same of him ("*He/And his lot will all go down the long slide/Like free bloody birds*"), and how wrong they are. Then, as if standing back from his conclusion in utterly dazed resignation, he writes:

And immediately
Rather than words comes the thought of
high windows:
The sun-comprehending glass,
And beyond it, the deep blue air, that
shows
Nothing, and is nowhere, and is
endless.

None of which is to say that Larkin had



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no taste for life. For all his grousing, he was quite capable of falling under the spell of beauty, not least in the key of jazz (though, true to form, he rejected anything post-1945, lavished some of his highest praise on Billie Holiday and despised bebop with a hilarious fervor). He got some good poems out of it, too, in particular "For Sidney Bechet," which reveals as much about its author as its subject. "On me your voice falls as they say love should,/Like an enormous yes."

Larkin's poems, too, descend upon us like a big yes, even now that we know about his demons, and in spite of his insistence on the sad and monstrously unfair side of things. I don't think he would have been surprised by this; it was his greatest desire. As he told an interviewer in 1979: "I should hate anybody to read my work because he's been told to and told what to think about it. I really want to hit them, I want readers to feel yes, I've never thought of it that way, but that's how it is." It seems only fair that we should get to see him now not as we wish to, but as he saw himself. ■

Le Gai Savoir

BRENDA WINEAPPLE

AMERICANS IN PARIS: A Literary Anthology.
Edited by Adam Gopnik. Library of America. 613 pp. $40.

"Paris is a very old story," Henry James wrote in 1878—so old, in fact, that it's hard to write about it without falling into clichés about chestnut trees, *couture*, freedom and *l'amour*. But making the subject of writers in Paris—in particular, American writers—a fresh literary experience rather than an old chestnut is exactly what the various authors in the Library of America's marvelous new anthology manage to do.

Called—you've got it—*Americans in Paris: A Literary Anthology*, and edited by *New Yorker* writer Adam Gopnik, whose sojourn there was amiably recounted in *Paris to the Moon*, the Library of America's wide-ranging collection also lives up to the word Phillip Lopate (anthologist par excellence) gave it in advance praise: tasty. Seventy pilgrims hold out to the reader a portion of their dream of a different world, tidbits of delight and wisdom that extend from Benjamin Franklin's acute observation, "Travelling is one Way of lengthening Life, at least in Appearance," to Dorothea Tanning's comment, circa 200 years later, that one can't walk along the Boulevard Montparnasse without running into some former denizen eager to gab about Hemingway or Man Ray's Kiki, "sociable spooks full of droll stories but spooks all the same."

Yes, there is something spooky about the subject of Americans in Paris, since it's inevitably connected not just to a certain predictability but to a kind of longing. "Good Americans, when they die, go to Paris," quipped Oliver Wendell Holmes with reason. (Bad Americans go to America, Oscar Wilde replied.) We depend on our relationship to Paris, however vexed, for some definition of ourselves, even when we define ourselves in angry opposition. (Witness the recent furor over "freedom fries.") "It's a complex fate, being an American," as Henry James knew, "and one of the responsibilities it entails is fighting against a superstitious valuation of Europe." Gertrude Stein, of course, was more comfortable with the way Americans often think of themselves as citizens of somewhere else. "America is my country," she said, "and Paris is my hometown."

Paris, then, represents something just out of reach to Americans self-conscious about their rough-and-ready country, long on ingenuity and short on style. (In the Luxembourg Gardens, William Faulkner stands amazed. When the band plays Massenet or Berlioz, children hush and taxi drivers stop their cars.) Paris is a way of life, a sensibility, a force and a pleasure not found at home. "This book is a history of the worlds Americans have made in the city where they have gone to be happy," Gopnik writes in his preface. "It is in part, therefore, the history of an illusion." But expatriates (and even tourists) are a lonely lot, relishing their loneliness even while they protest against it, as Hemingway does hauntingly in his memoir *A Moveable Feast*. Strolling along the Seine, with "the beautiful barges with

Brenda Wineapple is the author of Sister Brother: Gertrude and Leo Stein *and, most recently,* Hawthorne: A Life, *which will appear in paperback this month.*

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their own life on board, the tugs with their smokestacks that folded back to pass under the bridges, pulling a tow of barges, the great elms on the stone banks of the river, the plane trees and in some places the poplars," he recalls, "I could never be lonely along the river." But he is.

A later visitor, Paul Zweig, transforms his loneliness into a religious discipline until he conquers the language, much "as if I had crossed a line through a membrane and found myself in a new, unheard-of place full of intense forms that were almost familiar, almost ordinary." Most Americans, though, remain safe in the cocoon of their American-ness. "The Americans in Montparnasse, sitting at their tables in front of Le Sélect and talking at each other, reminded me of monkeys on a raft," A.J. Liebling observes. "They were not in the water at all." By and large, Americans do not master French. "Paris remains a kind of literary laboratory," Gopnik suggests, "where American style gets made and proffered in refined form." This is especially true for the writers gathered in this book.

Though their responses are arranged in rough chronological order, these writers almost seem to converse with one another about Paris and *la mode*, literary and otherwise, they find there. Similarly, the reader enters into constant dialogue with them and of course will like some of them better than others, or wonder why this one appears, not that. Why E.E. Cummings on Josephine Baker and not, say, Janet Flanner, whose witty reportage from Paris as Genêt, *The New Yorker*'s Paris correspondent, helped create for Americans the ambience of the Jazz Age abroad? (Gopnik does choose, instead, Flanner's terrific report on the French reaction to Franklin Roosevelt's death, more important for its moving account of women prisoners returning the next day from Ravensbrück "dressed like scarecrows, in what had been given them at camp, clothes taken from the dead of all nationalities." De Gaulle wept to see them.) Why Richard Harding Davis on cafe life, or the prolix Harriet Beecher Stowe? What, no William Dean Howells, no Mavis Gallant, no American accounts of the "phony war" in 1940?

Such quibbles are inevitable and a measure of the volume's success. Anthologists must leave out more than they include—it's the nature of the beast—and here what's omitted is secondary to unexpected treats: poems by Elizabeth Bishop and Richard Wilbur, song lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein and Cole Porter, excerpts from the memoirs of P.T. Barnum (who, predictably, finds the French impressible)

Bestselling author of *Body of Secrets* and *The Puzzle Palace*

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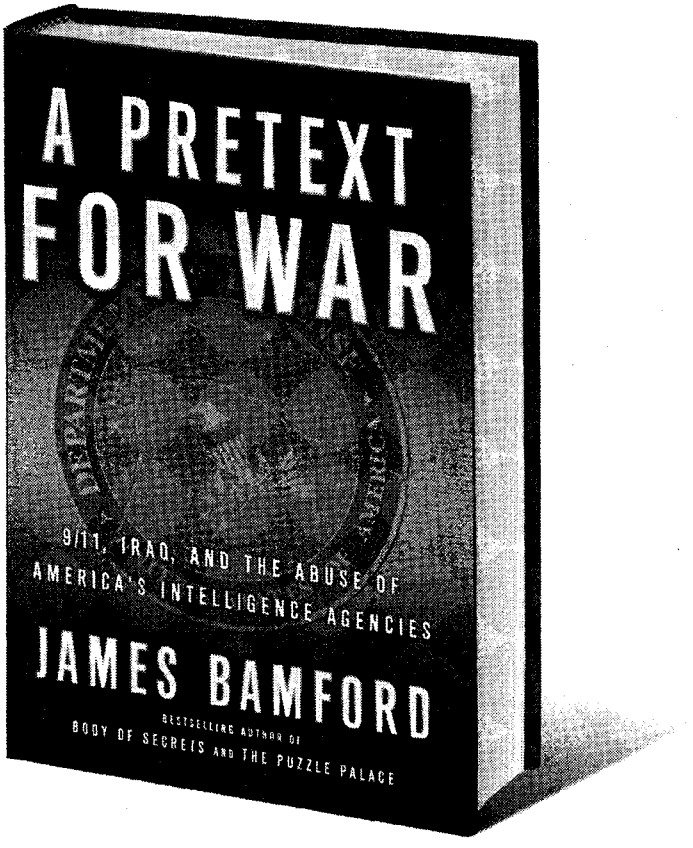
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and jazz clarinetist Sidney Bechet. Longfellow sports a glossy French hat, rolled up at the sides; Diana Vreeland humanizes Coco Chanel; James Baldwin goes to jail; and Anne Morrow Lindbergh, feeling unchic, buys a black dress. Charles Lindbergh breathlessly evokes (in the present tense) his landing at Le Bourget airport on the night of May 21, 1927, and his reminiscence is followed by Waverly Root's description of that same night, when foreign correspondents ferociously competed for the six phone booths to break the story. Langston Hughes shares digs with a poor Russian girl; Dawn Powell finds Paris a good place to be a dope fiend; Abigail Adams, unusually fastidious, says it is "the very dirtiest place I ever saw."

According to Gopnik, images of Paris cluster around two poles, "one essentially bourgeois, the other bohemian." The connoisseurs of *la vie de bohème*—among them Henry Miller, Jack Kerouac and that old rogue, Ben Franklin—have come for the drink and the dazzle, the food, fornication and the Folies Bergères. The others are the sober types such as Frederick Douglass and Henry Adams or students like Randolph Bourne. Obviously, though, the two camps mix and match: Malcolm Cowley is both, or at least that's what he thinks, and James Gallatin, the diplomat's son, learns, as he puts it, that "Paris is indeed the paradise of young men." Also, Americans come to Paris as merchandisers (the impresario George Catlin) and as philistines (which is how Mark Twain, in the excerpt included from *The Innocents Abroad*, presents himself). "How much francs is in money," asks Lorelei in Anita Loos's sly *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*. And they come to pay their respects. Scholar George Ticknor meets Chateaubriand, a man with "the heart of a poet, whose family has been exterminated by one revolution, and who has himself been sacrificed to another."

If Ralph Waldo Emerson, quintessential New Englander, calls Paris a "loud modern New York of a place," he too is swept away by its ordered beauty. In the Jardin des Plantes, he finds a connection between himself and all aspects of nature as only Emerson (and Whitman) can: "I feel the centipede in me—cayman, carp, eagle, & fox. I am moved by strange sympathies." Then, at Père Lachaise—he is truly open to all things—Emerson astutely reads the tombstones. "Not separating flesh from spirit, the French write 'Here lies Augustus'; the Americans, 'Here lies the body of....'"

By and large, though, images of Paris seem also given to recollection and its wispy companion, nostalgia. One simply can't get away from the spooks, even though the anthology largely (and mercifully) avoids them. But nostalgia is an unavoidable part of the memory industry, especially when memories gather around the sensual and evanescent: a smell, a season, a quality of pearly light never forgotten. Writing in 1934, Edith Wharton remembers when she first moved to Paris in 1907 and the thirteen years she spent there that still "rise up to meet me whenever I turn the corner of the street." Even Gertrude Stein, the least nostalgic of all writers, recalls the tender little trees of a bygone Montmartre. Fortunately, though, to represent the exuberant 1930s (itself a cliché) Gopnik selects the diaries of Sherwood Anderson and the manic poet Harry Crosby ("dancing in the streets all last night, grotesque couples whirling madly about...while paper lanterns swing to and fro between the drab buildings silhouetted against a lemon-colored sky"), as well as a 1929 postcard from Hart Crane whose immediacy sums up a giddy decade: "absinthe, music, promenades, oysters, sherry, aspirin, pictures, Sapphic heiresses, editors, books, sailors. And How!" Then there is Scott Fitzgerald's story, "Babylon Revisited," in which the worn-out Charlie Wales, bohemian *manqué*, realizes too late that the snow of 1929 was real.

And in a remarkable piece by John Dos Passos, we get something far tougher than nostalgia. Returning to Montmartre in 1937, he remembers long-ago Paris from the very real perspective of the Popular Front, Léon Blum, anti-Semitism and the Spanish Civil War. Everywhere he hears story after story of atrocities, curious that they "mirror, instead of the events they purport to describe, the extent of the hatred of the people that tell them."

Obviously, Paris is no stranger to violence or war, and Americans reckon with that too. When Nathaniel Hawthorne has a nosebleed, he comments with typical gallows humor that "my blood must be reckoned among the rivers of human gore which have been shed in Paris, and especially on the Place de la Concorde, where the guillotine used to stand." American minister to France in 1869, Elihu Washburne is in Paris during the siege, and as Paul Zweig says of the city in 1956, "Paris was only a tank ride from Budapest." But Gopnik ends his collection before the late 1960s partly because, as he explains, it marked the end of something: "1968, and the 'events' of May, was the last time that Paris was indisputably the center of the world," he writes, a statement sure to please consumers of freedom fries, though I doubt they'll be

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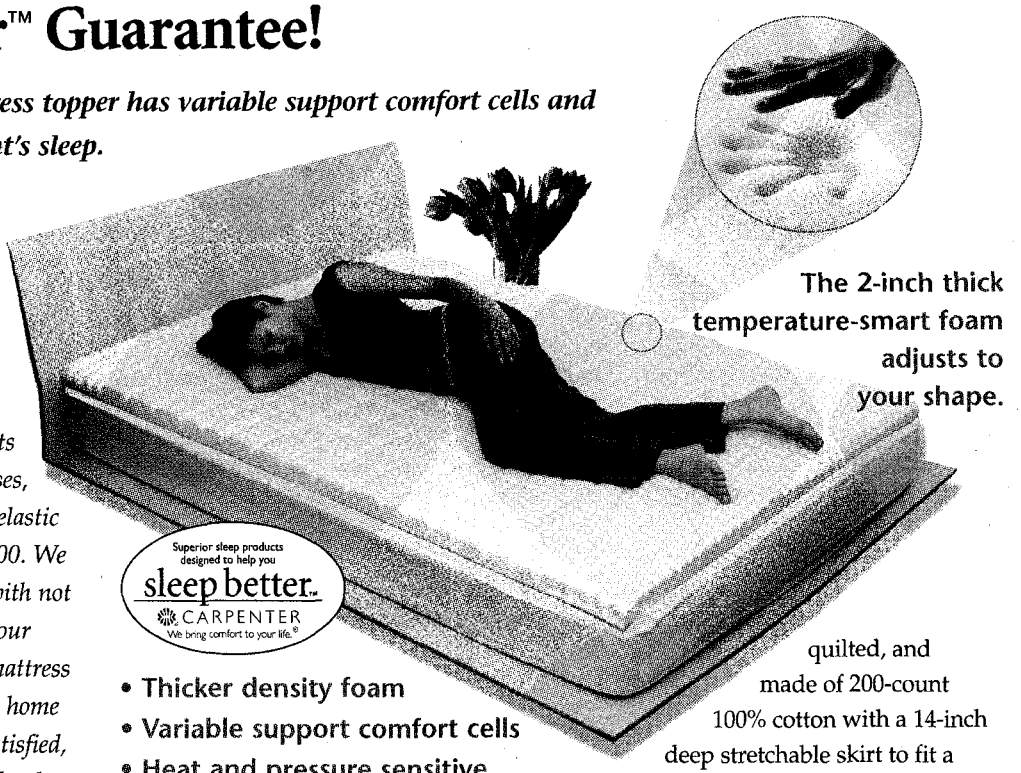

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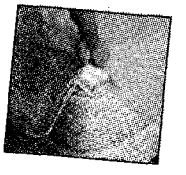

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reading this book. If they do, they'll understand that Americans in Paris—and many other Americans too—carry a dual citizenship: Paris is my hometown, America is my country. Like it or not, Paris is very much part of the American psyche, assuming we can still refer to such a thing.

But as Henry James perspicaciously observes, "the moment certainly does not seem very well chosen for inviting the world to come to Paris to amuse itself. The world is too much occupied with graver cares." James is right, especially now; how can we deny it? Yet Gopnik has a point: To the Americans there (even the disgruntled ones), Paris represents an ode to joy, the serious kind that embraces loneliness, longing and the hope of a better world. "The city gives you the feeling of being something stable and permanent in a changing world of violence," observes Dos Passos. That seems to summarize the appeal of the horse chestnuts, perennially blooming, the unselfconscious lovers and those tender little trees.

Or of the huge and glassy Gare de Lyon, which M.F.K. Fisher celebrates (sans nostalgia) in true romantic fashion. "No other railroad station in the world manages so mysteriously to cloak with compassion the anguish of departure and the dubious ecstasies of return and arrival," she writes with affection in one of Gopnik's final sections. "It comes down," she concludes, "to a question of where one really chooses to be, and for how long." The most apt metaphor for Paris itself—and of the Americans there, who rush in and out, dreaming their next meal will taste of violets—this wondrous station, a tribute to a *belle époque*, battered, restored and still graceful, is a place she can leave without sadness, believing she can return, which Americans always do. ■

Bourgeois Dystopias

ERIC KLINENBERG

BUILDING SUBURBIA: Green Fields and Urban Growth, 1820–2000.
By Dolores Hayden. Pantheon. 318 pp. $26.

A FIELD GUIDE TO SPRAWL.
By Dolores Hayden. Norton. 128 pp. $24.95.

The suburbs don't feel suburban anymore. In metropolitan regions from California to Massachusetts, growth proliferates uncontrollably and unsustainably, rural areas are paved for subdivisions and big-box stores, traffic and congestion are endless and no one can find parking at the mall.

The historian Robert Fishman famously called American suburbia a "bourgeois utopia," because it "founded its hopes for community stability on the shifting sands of land speculation and based its reconciliation of man and nature on the capacity to exclude the urban world of work." Today most new jobs are in the suburbs. The majority of new immigrants, and increasing numbers of African-Americans, gays and the poor, are settling down outside the city lines. Single and elderly suburban residents outnumber married couples with kids. More Americans live in the suburbs than in cities and rural areas combined.

The search for sanctuary, security and class segregation that motivated early suburbanization advances outward. Developers build gated communities. Buyers want homes in the woods. Sprawl expands everywhere but the center, leaving downtowns underutilized, neighborhoods abandoned. One is as likely to find open fields, quiet sidewalks and tall grass on the streets of "inner city" Detroit, Philadelphia or Brooklyn as on the periphery. Cultural trendsetters leave Manhattan for happening towns in New Jersey. Entrepreneurs prefer Silicon Valley to San Francisco. There's more ethnic diversity in the shops of Skokie than on the streets of Chicago. Suburbs are becoming urban, rendering the landscape increasingly incoherent. Critics use terms like "edge city," "technoburb" and "exurban." Our metropolitan vocabulary is breaking down.

So, too, are clichés about suburbia and the city, even though they remain staples of popular culture. Courses on "the problems of cities," are standard features of the sociology, history and political science curriculums offered to elite (and mostly suburban) students, even though the classic urban troubles—crime, corruption, segregation, drug use, school violence—are also suburban problems.

Long scorned by cultural critics and urbane intellectuals who disdained the suburbs as places, and had little interest in studying them, suburbia is now a booming theme for academic research, deeply influenced by two classic histories from the 1980s, Kenneth Jackson's *Crabgrass Frontier* and Fishman's *Bourgeois Utopias*. Both books identified the political and economic engines and racial tensions driving suburban growth machines (made up of builders, bankers, speculators and real estate brokers) and showed how new transportation technologies, cheap energy supplies and government subsidies quickly transformed the United States into the quintessential suburban nation. *Crabgrass Frontier* dramatically documented how federal housing policies legitimized racially discriminatory lending standards, exclusionary suburban developments and restrictive covenants, thereby subsidizing white flight (and in turn wealth accumulation), relegating African-Americans to declining central cities and deepening segregation. *Bourgeois Utopias* emphasized how the overlapping interests of the affluent (who were eager to flee filthy downtowns and the working classes), idealistic planners and big builders made suburban expansion possible. But Fishman concluded, presciently, that sprawl and advanced communications would knock "true suburbs" out of existence, creating techno-regions where every home was a working center.

Dolores Hayden, a professor of architecture and American studies at Yale and the author of pathbreaking books on the politics of gender, planning and urban design (most notably *Redesigning the American Dream* and *The Power of Place*), makes a landmark contribution to this literature with two new books about the historical emergence and recent transformation of the suburbs. The first, *Building Suburbia: Green Fields and Urban Growth, 1820–2000*, is an engaging and richly illustrated account of the conflicts among entrepreneurs, residents, planners and bureaucrats who battled to realize competing visions for the suburbs. The second, *A Field Guide to Sprawl*, focuses on the contemporary landscape.

Hayden does not offer a grand reinterpretation of suburban history. But *Build-*

Eric Klinenberg, assistant professor of sociology at New York University, is the author of Heat Wave: A Social Autopsy of Disaster in Chicago *(University of Chicago).*

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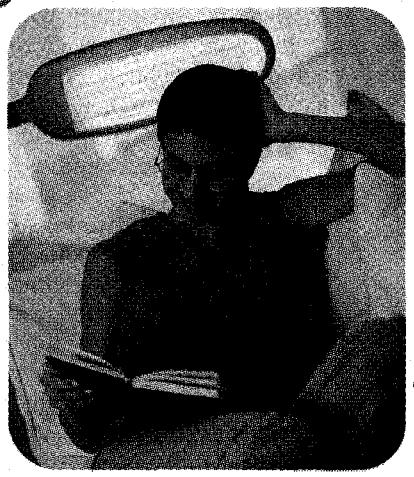

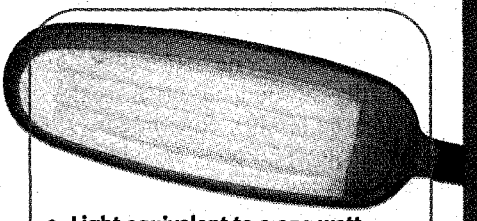

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ing Suburbia makes several major advances. Most fundamentally, it introduces a novel conceptual scheme for distinguishing seven modes of suburban development, each defined by an assemblage of distinctive architectural styles, marketing strategies, building techniques and attitudes about nature. At first glance it's unclear why we need another set of categories to differentiate suburbs. But Hayden's typology—borderlands (beginning around 1820), picturesque enclaves (1850), street-car suburbs (1870) mail-order and self-built suburbs (1900), mass-produced, urban-scale sitcom suburbs (1940), edge nodes (1960) and rural fringes (1980)—facilitates a useful new way of seeing vernacular patterns in the suburban landscape. Previous suburban taxonomies defined periods of suburban growth too narrowly, often with a technological determinism that emphasized transportation or building materials over cultural, political or economic forces. Hayden's categories help us recognize that the suburbs have been as dynamic as cities, that neither their social meaning nor their architectural form can be summed up by the white picket fence.

Readers familiar with Hayden's work will not be surprised that she emphasizes how women and men experienced different modes of suburban development. Early suburban planners made imaginative efforts to satisfy men's American dream of suburban home-ownership, but they failed to consider how women would react to their deep domestication, and too often the community life they promised failed to work. Hayden breaks with previous scholars in placing the struggle over women, families and the built environment at the heart of the suburban crisis, carefully showing how women's interests became engines of change in planning and design. She argues that "the single-family suburban house implies isolation, lacking physical and social context. For women, the dream is house plus neighborhood sociability."

Revisiting themes from *Redesigning the American Dream*, Hayden illustrates how different suburban forms—from Andrew Jackson Downing's landscaped estates (where men and their assistants were assigned the heavy gardening, women the ornamentation and weeding) to Catharine Beecher's working home for wives and contemporary fringe outposts removed from social environments—isolated and domesticated women, generating complaints about "lonelyville" in every generation. Beecher, a bestselling author and influential reformer in the early 1800s, "defined household work and nurturing as 'woman's true profession'" and "advised marrying early, giving up worldly activities, [and] having ten children." Yet she "never practiced the domestic feminism she preached," choosing instead a public and cosmopolitan life. Hayden credits Beecher with advancing domestic design by decades and making genuine improvements in women's work space. But like so many other architects and planners, Beecher "failed to understand the intense desire for community on the part of potential suburban residents."

Drawing heavily on primary sources, Hayden insists that suburban projects were more diverse and democratic than their critics have understood. By the 1850s communitarian movements began to influence landscapers, builders and designers, and an emerging class of reformers believed they could craft a transformative social architecture outside the city. New plans for picturesque enclaves, such as Alexander Jackson Davis's Llewellyn Park, New Jersey, and Frederick Law Olmsted's Riverside, Illinois, emphasized collective open space and encouraged shared public life. One communitarian settlement in Mount Vernon, New York, attracted 300 families by offering "protection against the unjust power and influence of capital"; others developed model towns to improve women's status through shared services and technological support. *Building Suburbia*'s illustrations—including architectural plans, advertisements, photographs, maps and drawings—convey advocates' buoyant confidence that they were improving the infrastructure of everyday life.

Utopian plans for suburbia have been consistently undermined by class segregation and developers' hunger for profit.

Yet Hayden also documents how quickly utopian plans for suburbia went awry once the first generation of reformers disappeared and the speculators arrived. Picturesque enclaves, for example, became templates for two of the more odious suburban forms. First there was the exclusive, sometimes gated community, developed as an enclave for the affluent, often substituting a country club for the picturesque park. Tuxedo Park, New York, with gated estates inside a gated community, and Lake Forest, Illinois, with its spacious polo grounds and golf courses, feature prominently here. Second was the flat subdivision, with increased housing density, straightened roads, insufficient infrastructure and less public space—and usually the word "park" in its name, "whether it had a park or not." These would become suburbs for the masses, but only once they shed the landscaping, architectural charm and communitarian ethos that inspired reformist planners in the first place.

The two pressures that undermined the picturesque enclave—residents' drive for class segregation and developers' hunger for profit in the mass market—return in every stage of Hayden's account, devastating so many of the virtues embedded in each suburban form. Though she never names it, *Building Suburbia* reveals an underlying pattern in the history of US suburbanization: the tendency of privately organized and publicly supported growth machines to flatten, homogenize and reduce the most original and utopian suburban plans; and the consistent efforts of elite classes to separate themselves from the rest of the metropolis, even as they benefit disproportionately from mortgage subsidies and other social policies that purportedly promote housing for the middle class.

Building Suburbia vividly illustrates how housing policies directly altered the landscape in different periods of suburbanization. Much of Hayden's argument covers familiar territory, but her analysis of how federal legislation for accelerated depreciation facilitated the development of cheap commercial buildings, unsightly roadside strips and even unwanted sprawl is revelatory. In 1954 a Republican Congress intent on reversing a recession through speculative construction passed a tax-reform bill "enabling owners to depreciate or write off the value of a building in...a short time." According to Hayden, the bill "not only encouraged poor construction, it also discouraged adequate maintenance" by failing to provide any support for renovation of existing structures. Social policy made new construction a public good, and left existing buildings to deteriorate. "As the boom accelerated," Hayden argues, "the federal government encouraged suburban developers to cannibalize their own cities."

Builders rushed to put up shopping malls, motels and office complexes within open suburban areas. For the first time, they also began constructing complexes in the open fields beyond suburban borders, in the "growth nodes" and "tomorrowlands" that became today's sprawl. Hayden counts 22,000 suburban shopping centers built between the mid-1950s and late 1970s, 43,000 by the late 1990s. "By 2000," she

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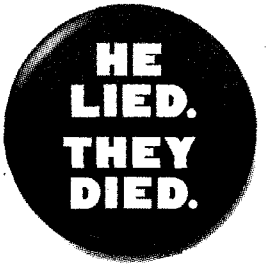

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writes, "Americans had built almost twice as much retail space per citizen as any other country in the world." Federal highway funds insured that there would be new roads to connect rural fringe areas to suburbs and cities. Yet the paucity of investment in public transportation meant that trains and buses were inadequate to serve the sprawling suburban nation.

Now most Americans need cars to reach work and the marketplace. On weekdays congested streets replace the town square as a public space. According to a Chicago suburbanite Hayden quotes, "The only way you can see other people from Schaumburg is through their car windows, as they drive home from work."

Today frustration with sprawl and suburban overdevelopment is widespread, and environmental groups, smart-growth movements and citizens' campaigns are fighting to protect the landscape. In recent years contemporary architects and planners have produced a new menu of design solutions, including New Urbanist and neotraditional villages such as Seaside, Florida; digital smart houses designed to promote virtual communities in self-contained, private space; and sustainable "green" houses built with recycled materials and powered by renewable energy sources. But Hayden is skeptical. "Better architecture cannot, in itself, change the larger patterns of social and economic exploitation developed by growth machines which profit from round after round of fringe development."

Instead, Hayden advocates what I would call a deep urban political ecology, based on a public commitment to restore and preserve the nation's rich supply of residential and commercial buildings, and a federally sponsored project to improve the quality of metropolitan life. She has concrete (if controversial) proposals for curbing sprawl, such as capping mortgage subsidies (which currently cost over $100 billion annually, nearly half of which goes to families with incomes over $100,000), imposing design review for new construction, implementing regional planning for edge nodes and subsidizing renovation of older buildings.

She also has good company, in a generation of innovative scholars and legislators who recognize that solving the suburban crisis means reckoning with the damage caused by politically divisive municipal borders. Former Minnesota State Senator Myron Orfield and Harvard Law Professors Gerald Frug and David Barron are exploring possibilities for regional legislatures and metropolitan governing structures that will change the terms of home rule, enabling municipalities to collectively address problems that transcend the city limits. The city line—shifting boundaries that divided American metropolitan areas into thousands of municipalities, urban and suburban, separate and unequal—has been a powerful but largely unrecognized source of inequality. Today most townships work within a vast political mosaic to administer their own policies and programs, from schooling to social services, housing to policing, and are reluctant to share public goods or plan collectively with neighboring communities. "Home rule" provisions, which protect the autonomy, freedom and choice of local governments, are sacrosanct.

But home rule doesn't work for cities or suburbs. The trouble is not simply that wealthy suburbs horde resources, leaving poor municipalities and central cities unequipped to protect or educate their constituents. According to Frug and Barron, who have been interviewing mayors and city administrators throughout the Boston metropolitan area, local officials are discovering that they are usually powerless to address issues such as traffic, pollution, transportation and unwanted growth—difficulties that most Americans endure daily and are beginning to regard as political concerns. The fragmentation of metropolitan regions exacerbates these problems, since even successful efforts to block new developments typically push them to neighboring towns, and congestion spills over. The ideal of local autonomy, in which small communities determine the quality of their own environment, is a fantasy that has become a trap, blocking the development of regional governments that could better manage regional problems.

Today there is bipartisan dissatisfaction with the status quo of congestion, pollution, failing school systems and sprawl. We need a bold, imaginative policy agenda to address these issues. But the American political imagination has failed to generate a meaningful response. Dolores Hayden's new books are a provocation to engage the problem of the city line, lest it become a defining feature of the twenty-first century as well. ■

Morning Ritual

Before the pork buns steamed in the pot,
moisture in their white folds, before
the dried tofu was trimmed into thin strips,
my father raked long grain rice out of the mesh bag,

stirred it on the stove to get the texture right.
He filled a bowl with porridge, sprinkled dried pork shreds
and salted peanuts into a heap on top. Each morning
my father told me to bring the bowl upstairs.

My grandmother listened for my feet grazing
the carpet. She reclined on her bed
with the blue hydrangea pattern I wanted.
I handed her the tray, glanced at the expanding

brown thatch that coated her face.
She said something in Taiwanese; I ignored her.
My father said porridge, peanuts, pork, were her favorite.
He never added cashews or cucumbers. Day after

day, he rubbed the wooden Buddha's head, told me
not to wear white in my hair, not to leave chopsticks vertical
in a bowl of rice; I did it anyway. I counted the days, one by one,
like the raisins I stole from the box on her bedside table.

Victoria Chang

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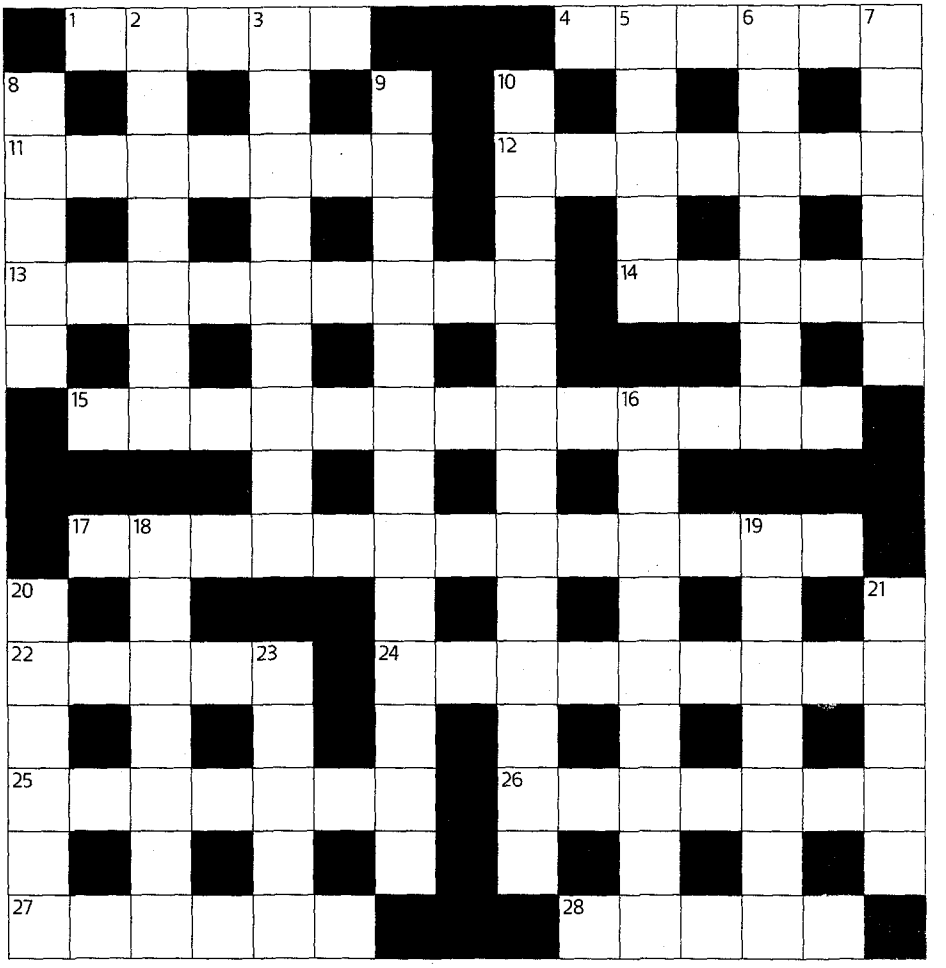

ACROSS

1 Getting this exact color could be quite an upsetting chore. (5)

4 Has altered the contents of what one possibly did at the altar, and came clean when one did. (6)

11 The cost of a trip to Reno? (7)

12 Thought one's suit was better than it was, if one did, and possibly be fired perhaps! (7)

13 Take something to pieces when the island met with misfortune. (9)

14 At least it's one way the picture could get finished! (5)

15 The older you get, the more you'll have. (13)

17 The way Peck's boy behaved! (13)

22 The way trees get chopped up shows what one might do with alarm! (5)

24 Could be cooked plainly, but more likely to be with no dressing. (2,7)

25 Was Ron flat out of it, describing a certain position? (7)

26 They may involve coming out, that is, in something you can be out of. (7)

27 Such a thing is expected to happen. (6)

28 Time and time again, you'll find it a traditional saying! (5)

DOWN

2 One of those army rollers? (7)

3 One whose 10 is related to self. (9)

5 A ray at right angles to the middle. (5)

6 What one does is probably frequent. (7)

7 See 20

8 Draws out political entities, possibly. (5)

9 In a man-made manner—but not by a real friend and helper. (13)

10 When part of the football team shows it, you don't take umbrage! (13)

16 In a clarinet, typically, it's the most, which is said more than once! (9)

18 Where to find such as horses and cattle readily available. (2,5)

19 Hanging around in suspicious fashion? (7)

20 and **7** A rather clever player on the field, or on the stage, though somewhat evasive. (6,6)

21 Unimpressed by such a sable creation? (5)

23 Well, that about sums it up! (5)

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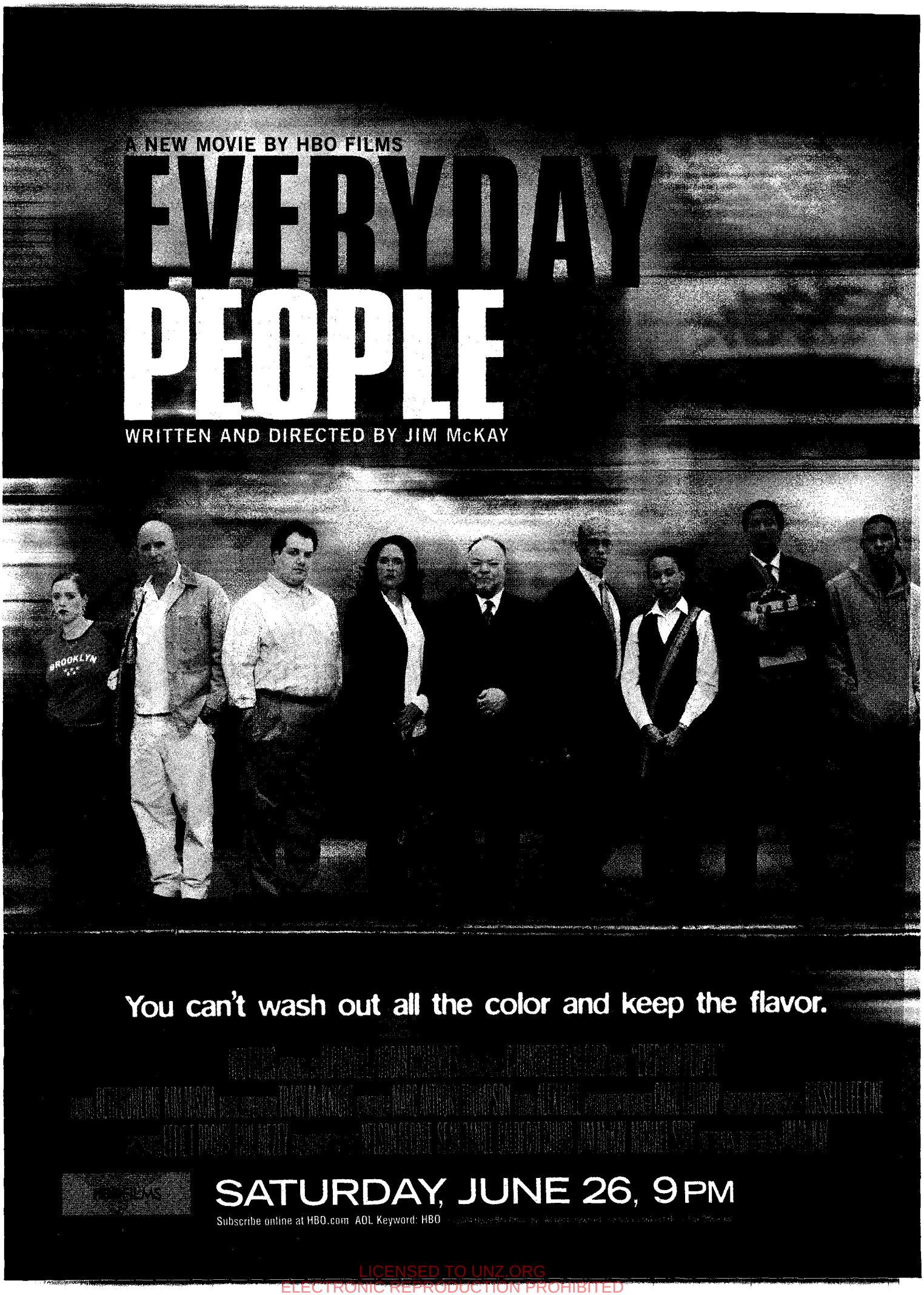
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